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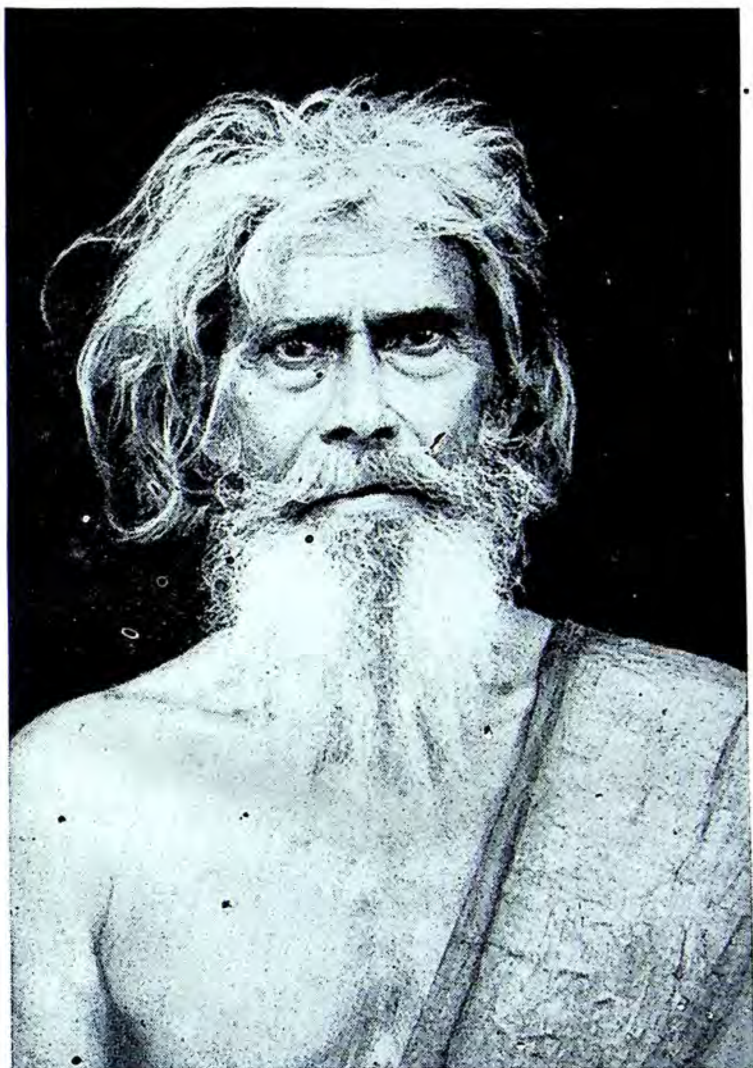
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FOREWORD

I am glad that a sketch of the life and pious activities of Abdhutaswami Biswanath Baba has been written by my old student, Shri Satrughna Nath, former Principal, Radhanath Training College, Cuttack and a well-known educationist of Orissa. He is himself a lay disciple Mahima Dharma, of which Biswanath Baba is now the head of the Church and the most learned mendicant-exponent. Shri Nath is a keen student of the faith and has some learned papers on the cult to his credit. His parents were also Mahima disciplies, and his father was initiated to the faith by one of its leading lights, Raghubar Das Baba of the first line in the Order, at the beginning of the century.

The Alekha cult believes in a casteless society, recognition of one God, abandonment of external rituals and thinking always of the good of mankind. These tenets are sure to commend themselves to thinking people all over the world, and I hope this little book on the life of the greatest living exponent of the faith will receive the attention which it richly deserves.

This publication includes a bibliography together with an abstract of Baba's books and papers. It will help the readers in knowing about the pious path of austerity followed by Biswanath Baba.

I know Baba for the last forty years. I had the pleasure of contributing a few words as a foreword to his *Chinmaya Brahma Gita* in 1933 and also to his *Alekha Param Brahma Darshanam* (Vol. I) in 1968. Baba has spent his life in propagating the basic principles of the Mahima faith.

P. Parija
Former Vice-Chancellor
UTKAL UNIVERSITY

INTRODUCTION

Most of the literature on the Mahima cult is in Oriya. There is really a great dearth of such literature in English and modern Indian languages. Therefore, scholars interested in the study of the cult, who do not know Oriya, find it difficult to gain access to the authoritative and original treatises on the faith. In recent times, the number of such scholars has been on the increase. To meet their needs, an attempt is made here to give, in English, abstracts of the books and papers written by Abadhuta Biswanath Baba who is an authority on the faith. Along with the bibliography, a short biographical sketch has also been included. The bibliography is confined to the books and papers by Baba. But it covers, in a systematic manner, the different aspects of the faith. No other writer can excel Baba in regard to the depth of discussion as well as the different dimensions of the faith. He has been most widely quoted. His treatises have gained recognition as authoritative texts. In fact, there are, on the faith, no discussions or discourses without referring to Baba's writings. This being so, it is necessary to attempt a pen-picture of the Baba's life with special reference to the literary and creative aspects.

Baba is the oldest and seniormost monk of the Order. He has been at the highest in *Brahma sadhana.* His life is, indeed, the history of the development of Mahima Dharma. It is impossible within a short compass to portray his life, ever emerging in vision and thoughts for the realisation of Brahman. Therefore, the biography given in these pages is confined to his production of books and papers.

It has been most satisfying for me to undertake this venture. I have been encouraged and helped in the task by *parapara sanyasis*, *bairagis* and *gruhi* devotees. I am

indeed grateful to them. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my teacher and well-wisher, Dr. P. Parija, former Vice-Chancellor of Utkal University, who took great interest in the work and wrote the foreword. I would really be failing in my duty if I do not express my gratitude to my friend, Shri Gopi Nath Das, without whose interest, help and encouragement this little book would not have materialised.

Let me pray to the Absolute Lord Param Brahman to make us all constantly conscious of *sat*, *chit* and *anand*.

S. Nath

CHAPTER I

BABA– A STUDY

BRAHMABADHUTA BISWANATH BABA

With a smile on his face, Baba draws himself within and attributes all his achievements, including those in the field of literature, to the Almighty, Absolute, *Alekha Parama Brahman*. His *bhajana*, "Life is an expression of His glory and this life should always be subject to Him"[1] is not an empty hymn, but an echo of his own realisation. "No book, not even a line, is possible without His Grace", he goes on to add.

Baba is the author of twenty-one publications, which run into more than five thousand pages. In the preface to each, he has made a categorical admission of the direction that he received from the Undirected, Undifferentiated and Unwritten Lord, who is one only and second to none. He has acknowledged the help received from Ananta Charan Das Baba, who worked as his scribe, as well as from *siddha-sadhus, sadhus, bairagis* and householders. But the supreme direction came from within, when he was one with the All-pervading, Omniscient *Paramatma*.

Most of his works are in prose[2]. For the few in verse, he cautions the reader not to attribute any poetic genius to him[3]. He talks freely with all, young and old. His thoughts and experiences flow without interruption when he is questioned. He invites discussions. When people express amazement at his wisdom and depth of study of the *Shruti-Shastras*, he says : "Ideas, words and references

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1. *Taba abhare prakasa hoichhi jibana, sehi atma heu taba padare adhina.*
2. There are 18 publications in prose and 4 in verse.
3. *Gita*, introduction by Biswanath Baba.

flash whenever you are engrossed in intensive study and meditation in a detached way." The *Chinmaya Brahma Gita* gave him the clue to undertake the writing of the *Darshanam*. He claims no originality of his own. On the other hand, he affirms that the *ghatatma* is a mere expression of Mahima Mahaprabhu.

He refers to an incident[4] to explain his creative ability. It was in 1927. Sharan Panjar Das Baba, an adept in explaining Mahima Dharma, was resting at night in the Chandnichowk Tungi, at Cuttack. Dr. Arttaballava Mohanty[5], Professor of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack, and other scholars were participating in a discourse on the implications of *Brahma Sharana* and the dualistic and non-dualistic philosophies. As dictated by Sharan Baba, Biswanath Baba, whose interpretations were sound and learned, joined the discussion. With quotations from the *Shruti-Shastras*, he made an authoritative exposition of the peculiarities of Mahima Dharma and impressed them all. Sharana Baba's direction to Biswanath Baba to take up the discussion was the vision of a *siddha-sadhu* devoted wholly to Brahman.

This intuitive vision did not stop there. That year[6] some *siddha-sadhus*, including Sharan Panjar Das Baba and Biswanath Baba, were considering future plans for the spread of the religion. They felt that a systematic treatise on it was a real need. But who was to write it ? The practice of the religion on the part of a *sadhu* on strict adherence to the Guru's commandments left no time for writing a book. Also, could a person other than a self-realized one do it ? There was, till then, no book containing a systematic treatment of the religion, except the *bhajanas*, etc. by Bhima Bhoi, Jayakrushna, Narana and others. So Sharan Panjar Baba told Biswanath Baba affectionately, "We are getting old. Many attempts have been made

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4. *Charitamruta*, p.292.
5. An eminent litterateur and critic of ancient Oriya language and literature. Founder member of the Prachi Samiti, Cuttack.
6. *Ibid.*, pp.294-295.

from the time of the previous *siddha babas* to produce suitable literature on Mahima Dharma. Even now some *siddha babas* are working on it. But I venture to think that the great work will be completed by you only through the grace of Mahima Prabhu". With these words, he held Biswanath Baba's hands and indicated that he should go ahead with the work. Biswanath Baba replied, "Baba, you are the oldest. You are a wise *siddha-sadhu*. You can direct me. You can touch my head." Thereupon Biswanath Baba touched the feet of Sharan Baba, and both did *sharanamanya*. Then junior Baba Ananta Das was summoned and asked to assist in writing. Biswanath Baba undertook the task from 1927. Sharan Panjar Baba had even indicated the titles of the volumes.

It would, therefore, appear that there was a felt need for authoritative treatises, so as to make the movement meaningful, provide an intellectual base and maintain stable continuity of the principles. For this, Niladri Das Baba, Anama Das Baba, Krupasindhu Das Baba, Aparti Das Baba and other *Babas* had asked the *sadhu bhaktas* to codify the metaphysical and ethical principles of the religion on systematic lines[7]. The matter was discussed times without number. Accordingly, *sadhu* Karunakar Das and *sadhu* Machhindra Das of the *apara sanyasa* order and devotee Lakshmi Narayan Mahant of the Midnapur District in West Bengal produced a manuscript, entitled *Abadhuta Daršhana*, after working assiduously for about three years. It was submitted to the *siddha-sadhus* at the Gadimandal by *sadhu* Karunakar Das. Thereafter Niladri Das Baba, along with other *siddha-sadhus*, presented it to Shri Sura Pratap Mahendra Bahadur, the then ruler of Dhenkanal, to get it published. It was examined by a group of learned *sadhus*, consisting of Sharan Das Baba, Paramananda Das Baba, Chakradhara Das Baba, Dinabandhu Das Baba, Aniruddha Das Baba, Jogendra Das Baba and Kanhu Charan Das Baba. In the opinion of the committee, the

7. *Charitamruta*, pp.143—145.

cardinal principles of the religion and its fundamental basis had not been fully and correctly reflected in the manuscript and its publication was, therefore, dropped.

A similar venture was undertaken by Paramananda Baba, Ramananda Baba[8], Aniruddha Baba, Achyutananda Baba and others. They worked hard and collected data on the different aspects of the religion. But the write-up was not systematic and could not be accepted for publication.

Thereafter, the *siddha-sadhus*, including Niladri Das Baba, prayed to Mahima Swami to get the work done. *Veka Bana* and *Dharmadhama* must remain intact. A fervent prayer was, accordingly, offered.

At last, *Pratipadaka* and *Itihasa* written by Biswanath Baba were published in 1931 and 1935 respectively. When the two volumes were read out to *siddha* Krupasindhu Baba by Ananta Charan Baba, the former expressed great satisfaction. He commanded, " The previous attempts did not appeal to the mind. These two volumes have been published due to the grace of Mahima Mahaprabhu. His commandments are being adhered to, and they have been properly put forth in the two books. Prabhu's commandments are true and have been correctly recorded. I know that, due to the kindness of the Nath[9], His manifestations have been correctly represented." [10]

He continued, " Which *Purana* can exhaustively describe the glory (*mahima*) of Brahman, who is above all illusion ? Who can completely describe the Lord, who is indescribable ? He, who is blessed by Him, can know something about Him." Thus *siddha* Krupasindhu Baba commanded

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8. Cf. last two paragraphs of the foreword of *Baba Ramananda Bhajanamala*, 1953. The foreword has been written by Sadhu Sanatana Das, one of his spiritual sons and contains a life sketch. The *Bhojanamala* contains 140 *bhajanas* covering 154 pages.
9. *Charitamruta*, p. 43, foot-note.
10. *Ibid.*, pp.42-43 and *Satya Mahima Dharma*, 1943, p.29.

Gopala Das Baba, and asked him to bring this to the notice of all the *sadhus*.

This might have been the commandment of Mahima Swami, voiced through *siddha* Krupasindhu Baba, and meant for Biswanatha Baba, who was blessed to write about the Unwritten (*Alekha*). Sharan Panjar Baba's indication, as discussed above, was a clear hint to Biswanath Baba to rise equal to the occasion.

The satisfaction expressed by *siddha* Anama Das Baba and other *siddha babas* at the publication of *Pratipadaka* was a sort of divine encouragement to go ahead with the programme.

Never in a Hurry

About twenty years ago, due to the unbounded kindness of Baba, I was asked to go through the manuscript of the two volumes of *Darshanam* written by him. It was neatly bound and packed in a steel suitcase with a lock and key. It was most legibly written. I was amazed to find the care bestowed on it. The project was started in 1943 and completed in 1952. Volume-I was published in 1968 and Volume-II in 1973. The *Charitamruta* was begun in 1965 and the manuscript was ready by 1969. It was published in 1972. Baba is never in a hurry. His patience is unlimited. A writer's usual anxiety for quick publication is no concern of his. He is steady. He perhaps has command over the future course of action. His foresight goes far beyond one's imagination. There is no fear, if the mind is higher up in *Brahma Sadhana* (*abhaya mandala*).

Always and Ever Steady

Living the Mahima way fully and wholly is Biswanath Baba's daily routine. So he never stays, for any reason whatsoever, for more than one night in one village. One meal in a family and one night halt in a village are the Guru's commandments. That has seriously impeded the progress

of his writing. He has to be seated on the ground. Brahma *sharana*, *smarana*, *bhajana*, etc. are a must. All these do not leave much time for writing books.

Biswanath Baba acknowledges, with thanks, the help he received from Ananta Charan Baba[11] in collecting materials and in writing and re-writing the manuscripts of the *Itihasa*, *Pratipadaka*, *Darshanam*, etc. Pitambara Das Baba and Keshava Das Baba helped him in preparing the manuscript of the *Pratipadaka*. Care has been taken in revising, editing and correcting the manuscripts before they were made ready for the press. Proof correction was done thoroughly. No stage was left unattended to. Binding of large volumes has been carefully done. The cover page and the design have been looked into. Even correction slips have been attached to all the volumes. No stone was left unturned to make the publications as perfect as possible. Perfection has been the watchword.

Every volume, small or big, has a list of Biswanath Baba's publications and other authoritative lists on the faith with the name and address of the firm from which they can be had.

Locating a publisher, arranging a press, paper, etc., and even finding funds [12]—all these cause delay. Baba has been able to overcome all such difficulties. He has remained steady and steadfast, thanks to divine direction and the equanimity of heart, typical of a *Brahmanistha sadhaka*.

Sharp Memory

Another aspect of Biswanath Baba's personality is his sharp memory. In his extempore speeches, one is astoni-

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11. For a biographical sketch, see *Brahma Abadhuta Ananta Babanka Jibani* by Sadhu Pranabandhu Das, 1968.
12. Some devotees have, in some cases, borne the cost fully or partly. *Parapara Sanyasis* have also provided financial assistance for some publications.

shed at his profuse use of *slokas*. He has mastery over the *Shruti-Shastras* which he freely quotes. During discussions with small groups and with individuals, he quotes them extensively. He can not only quote a *sloka* in entirety, but also indicate the page of the book where it occurs. Thousands of *slokas* are, as it were, at the tip of his tongue.

How has he mastered them? No *Puranas*, *Shruti-Shastras*, *Smriti-Shastras*, or spiritual texts have escaped his memory. He has scanned them carefully. It is no mechanical repetition. Also, he has his own interpretation. The roots of the words and the contents are analysed. It is reported that he was a student of Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. Further, it is said that he studied Sanskrit in some Sanskrit colleges. But Baba's categorical pointer is to his Mahaprabhu. Mahima is his *alma mater*. He reveals Himself.

Ever Prepared

Besides individual and group discussions which Baba conducts almost everyday, he never misses a chance of addressing large gatherings, learned meetings, religious conferences, seminars, etc. He spares no pains to avail of opportunities for the spread of the religion.

He always comes prepared for addressing conferences. He prepares his written speech long beforehand. Sometimes he gets it printed for circulation in the meetings. In fact, the publications numbered 5, 9 to 12, 15, 17, 19 and 20 in Tables A and E in Chapter II were primarily meant for addressing meetings.

While writing books, essays, etc., Baba keeps himself thoroughly prepared. He notes down the points which arise out of his vision and experience. I have seen him doing so on several occasions. Besides, I have been told how Baba made a collection of reference books as an aid to his literary venture. Baba Benudhar Das made available some books on philosophy. One daring *sadhu*, Judhisthir

Das by name, undertook trips to Bombay, Lahore, Varanasi, Calcutta and other places and built up a library of books in Hindi, Bengali and Sanskrit on theology and philosophical systems. Many *sadhu bhaktas* also co-operated in the task.

Baba—an Open University

Baba's intellectual and spiritual activities are in keeping with *Visuddhatma Jnana Bhakti Yoga*. They represent an integration between *jnana* (Knowledge), *bhakti* (Devotion) and *karma* (Practice).

Baba moves generally with *bairagis* and *sadhus* of both the *para* and *apara sanyasa* orders. His own example is an object lesson to them. He is the first to get up in the morning and take to *Brahma sharana*. He practises the *Brahma sharana* in the three-fold way, i.e., in body, word and mind. He takes great interest in the well-being of the *sadhus* and *bairagis*. And he is most intolerant if they deviate from the Mahima way of life. *Bhajanas* are recited with *gini* and *khanjani*, and Baba sits and keeps watch. Any flaw in the song and rhythm is corrected. It is his practice to improve lines and phrases in the *bhajanas* of Bhima Bhoi, Jayakrushna and others in places where they are out of joint and meaningless[13]. Being a *siddha sadhu* in the second line of the *para sanyasis*, his equanimity, balance and control of mind are of the highest degree.

Apart from participation in *sharana*, *bhajana*, *chintana*, *akhanda ghrutahuti*, *balyalila*, etc., the *sadhus* and the *bairagis* have their *swadhyaya* (self-study) in the company of Baba. They carry with them a copy of the *Gita*, *Bhagabata*, *Stuti-chintamani*, *Bhajanamala*, *Pratipadaka*, etc. for intensive study. During early hours of the morning and evening,

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13. *Sthitibastiku rachila, keyum bhitare rahilu*, in place of *sthitibastire na thila, keyum bhitare pasila*, in *Bhajanamala*, p.4, *bhajanu* 6, stanza 5. There are many such instances.

they sit at convenient places for meditation, study or performance of *asanas* under Baba's guidance. When in difficulty, references are made to Baba. Thus it goes on from one sitting to another.

The householders, including devotees and non-devotees, join this group every night, which is the best time for learned discourses. Baba answers questions with his usual wit and humour as well as with supporting citations and authoritative quotations. An atmosphere of purity and sanctity peculiar to an *abadhutashrami Brahmanistha sanyasi* prevails while he is with them. Baba achieves his supramental states of meditation quite easily and unknowingly.

During limited hours of the night-halt and early next morning, he does his study, collects materials, analyses and systematises his thoughts and gives dictations. Preparation of speeches, etc. is time-bound, whereas the programme of writing books, essays, etc. is kept flexible. This is continued from one place of halt to another. But no halt can, on any account, be extended to the next night in the same place.

During meetings of an informal character, Baba delivers extempore speeches. They are generally short. Baba's sentences are small. They are uttered softly. They spring from his intuitive vision and experience. So they are full of ideas, supported by quotations. He invites questions which he is glad to answer.

From the bibliography arranged according to the year of publication (Table B), it is clear that the production of books has been a recurrent feature in Baba's life within an interval of one, two or three years. The maximum gap was that of eleven years between 1946 and 1957. I think this was due to the *Darshanam* (Nos. 7 & 8 in Table A) which was started in 1945 and completed in 1952. There are two intervals, each of five years, one between 1958 and 1963 and another between 1963 and 1968. However, the programme of publications has generally been continuous.

Baba welcomes dignitaries from within the State and outside and sometimes from foreign countries, and answers their queries. There has been an increase in the number of foreign scholars from West Germany, Switzerland, the U. S. A. and other countries, who visit the Baba. Research workers also are entertained. Necessary guidance is offered. Baba does not talk much. His soft words, uttered slowly, have their magic effect. He addresses them as *Babu*, which is indicative of affection and nearness. The entire world of men and women is, in Mahima Dharma, addressed as father and mother.

Baba usually presents his books to scholars and distinguished persons who meet him. He discusses with them the principles of the faith. Not only that, he expects that they should always carry the books with them. The books of smaller size, as noted against serial No. 1 in Table G, and those in English, as noted against serial No. 5 in Table C, are the most handy for this purpose. Baba was happy when he learnt that a scholar from West Germany, Dr. Anncharlott Eschmann, was learning Oriya in order to study the cult. He added amidst laughter that she must learn Oriya and practise the faith. The latest publication in English, i.e., No. 5 in Table A, was presented to her.

Correspondence is another important work during Baba's journeys. Questions are answered. Drafts are finalised. He writes letters to devotees asking them to remain firm in the Mahima way. Queries are made about the progress of work in *sadhana*, *bhajana*, publication, etc., and the replies are attended to. I have a feeling that Baba remains mentally in touch with his devotees. How he does it, is best known to him. But the letters received now and then confirm the feeling.

Through correspondence, he remains in touch with the management of *Gadimandal*. He issues instructions and directions, whenever needed. Being the head of the committee of *adhyakshas* at Mahima Gadi, matters relating to

day-to-day administration also receive his attention, though he may be miles away. He used to be consulted quite frequently by Vaman Charan Baba[14], Rajib Charan Baba[15], Aniruddha Baba, Motirama Baba, Rama Chandra Baba and other *Babas* since the commencement of the permanent *Dhuni Mandir*[16] and other major projects.

As in publications, so in the practice of the religion, perfection is Baba's watchword. He has evolved his tools for evaluating the performance of the *sadhus* in *Brahma sharana*, *sadhana* and *bhajana* before their initiation into the *parapara sanyasa* orders and admission into the *satsanga-gosthi*. He is a strict disciplinarian and has a probing eye. No departure or deviation from the Guru's commandments ever escapes his attention.

The *Gruhasthashram* is a basic component in the order. Through dialogues and discussions, even contacts and conversions, Baba is keen on maintaining the order stable and solid. The lay devotees are near to him. He believes that the solidarity of the entire order rests on them.

Baba has a coterie of *sadhus* who move in his company. They not only wait on him but also assist him in publications and in meetings and conferences. Some *tyagis*, *bairagis* and *gruhi* devotees come to his aid as and when required. Everyone is eager to come near him as they would gain insight into *Brahma sadhana* through Baba's blessings. These devotees are many in number, but a mention of the following *sadhus* may be made : Dayanidhi Das, Sudarsan Das, Pabitra Mohan Das, Basudeva Das, Srivatsa Das,

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14. Life sketch by Bramabadhuta Kshetrabasi Das Baba (1962).

15. Life sketch by Sadhu Dayanidhi Das and Sadhu Pabitramohan Das, published by Subhas Chandra Bairagi (1974).

16. It is known as Satya Mahima Sagara Dhuni Mandir. In the selection of the site, Baba acknowledges that he had the commandment of the Great Void. It was started in 1951 and completed in 1959.. The permanent Niti Mandir was begun in 1934 and completed in 1937.

Jadumani Das, Mohan Das, Madhusudan Das, Madhabananda Das, Rabindra Das, Subhas Das, Sanatan Das, Govinda Das and Narayan Das.

On arrival at or departure from a place of halt, and also after meals, the Baba prays for the welfare of the devotee who offers him hospitality. "May *Alekha Prabhu* grant all happiness. May the stores of the Babu remain ever full". Then he prays for the welfare of *jagata* and *bhagata*, i.e., the devotees and mankind. "May *Mahima Swami* make the *jagata* and *bhagata* happy". The blessings of Mahima Mahaprabhu Parama Brahma are invoked for removing sorrow and for fulfilling auspicious wishes. In the case of flood, drought or any epidemic affecting mankind far and near, special prayers are offered.

Baba's Early Life

In keeping with the tradition established by Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami, the founder of the religion, Baba does not disclose his parentage, place and date of birth, caste, early education, etc. It, however, appears that his parents were devout Mahima followers. There were many families following the Mahima faith in his village, where we find a number of devotees and *tungi ashramas* even now. His home was the centre of Mahima activities. His parents were highly spoken of for their devotion and hospitality. The *siddha-sadhus* of the first line, known as Sixty-four Siddhas[17], used to make frequent visits to the family.

It is borne out by the *sadhus* and *bhaktas* that Baba's parents belonged to a high strata of the society. They enjoyed a reputation in the locality. It was in a remote village in the district of Cuttack, not far from Dhenkanal, that he was born.

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17. The complete list may be seen at pages 1 to 3 in *Charitamruta*. Why they are so called has been explained by Baba in *Darshanam*, Vol. II, pp. 465—469.

The handsome boy was born amidst great expectations of adding to the prosperity and piety of the family. Little did the parents think that their son would renounce the world and be a tower of strength to the Mahima faith. He was hardly two years old when he crawled one day towards a marriage altar decorated with heaps of flowers. While he was about to put the flowers into his mouth, he was suddenly stopped. A strange experience at such a tender age.

As a small child, he used to imitate his parents in their religious practice. He began his early education in the village school. At the age of eight[18], he sought the permission of the parents to accept the *sanyasa* order. Right from childhood, he lost all attachment to worldly affairs. He realised, at an early age, the futility of idol worship. As a young child, he once watched the performance of Ganesh *Puja* in his village. He suddenly went up the *puja* dais and found that the idol did not look as attractive from behind as from the front. When the image was immersed in the village tank, he saw nothing but a few sticks and some straw. Where was the divinity ? Could this form be worshipped ? Was there anything beyond all forms ? Thus the young child started questioning.

We learn that *sadhu* Chandramani of Agrahat (near Charbatia railway station on the Puri-Talcher line), who later joined *apara sanyasa* order, paid a visit to the family of this boy when the latter was about five years of age. It was a moonlit night, and Chandramani was telling a few members of his family how Mahima Swami revealed Himself on a round stone on the top of the Kapilas hill. Then the great snake appeared and Swami closed his eyes in *ananta sayana* for *swatmayoga samadhi*[19]. The young Biswanath, who was fast asleep at a place within hearing distance from Chandramani, suddenly got up and asked

18. Preface to *Pratipadaka* by Ghanasyam Das.

19. For a detailed discussion, books on the life of Mahima Swami may be referred to.

within himself in wonder and excitement, "What is this *samadhi* ?"

That is how he decided to renounce the world. If all forms are false, what is the truth, the reality ? He must realise it. Being the youngest of all the brothers, the handsome boy was the cynosure of all eyes. The parents bestowed all their affection on him. How can they part with him ? Therefore, until he was eleven years of age, he studied religious texts in his family. Suddenly, before he had completed the tenth year, gout and rheumatism affected his right foot. The disease took such a serious turn that his parents lost hope about his recovery. They tried, in vain, to cure him and were at their wit's end. Thereupon, in the most appealing, but feeble voice he requested them again to allow him to join the *sanyasa* order as that would ultimately cure him. The parents were deeply moved and, with tears in their eyes, granted him permission. It is indeed miraculous that he felt better from that day, and was completely cured after some time. He then told his parents :

> "Born of Kapilamuni, *Abadhuta* by name
> Left as a child in *Abadhuta* frame".[20]

He used to repeat this song even when he was five or six years of age. One day *para sanyasis* Niladri Baba and Nanda Baba, with some *apara sanyasis*, were resting in his village. He was then twelve years old. That was the opportunity for the young *bairagi* to leave his parents in quest of truth in the company of the *siddha-sadhus*. He arrived at Guru Mahima Gadi. The young *tyagi* practised the rigid austerities of the faith. It created a stir among the *sadhus*. This took him five to six months, after which he was initiated into the *dorakaupinadhari apara sanyasa* Order. Tyagi Biswanath was, from that day, known as Sadhu Biswanath Das[21].

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20. "Nibedana" by S. Nath in *Darshanam*, Vol.I.
21. *Charitamruta*, pp. 389-390.

It is said that his mother, perhaps accompanied by his father, arrived at Guru Gadi on the day preceding his initiation. As a devotee, well-known for the purity of her heart and conviction in the faith, she was most welcome. But she had a lingering hope to get her son back to family life, while, among the circle of monks, last minute arrangements were being made for the initiation of the boy which was to begin at dawn. At last, before cock-crow, the young *apara sanyasi* Biswanath Das appeared on the scene, to the utter amazement of the spectators. The mother was shedding tears of joy.

According to the rules and regulations of the religion, the boy went to his village in the company of *siddha* Nanda Baba and the fellow *apara sanyasis*, and partook of food served by his parents under the open sky. As an *apara sanyasi*, he observed the religious principles with great care. He waited on the *siddha-sadhus* and assisted them in the routine programmes of Mahima Gadi. He carried out the instructions of the elders and his fellow *sanyasis*, regarding the activities connected with Mahima Swami, the *siddha-sadhus* and the spread of the religion. He also committed to memory the *janana* and *bhajana* of Mahima Mahaprabhu and could sing them well. He had a musical voice and was, therefore, heard by admirers, *sadhus* and co-disciples with eagerness. He studied the various books and texts and understood them fully. With the knowledge thus acquired and the experience gained, he could explain the religious principles in a convincing manner. Thus he spent about seven years as a devoted *apara sanyasi* and practised the rigid austerities of the faith.

Siddha Nanda Das Baba was directed by Mahima Mahaprabhu from the Great Void to revive the intiation of *sadhus* into the *para sanyasa order*, and this was accepted by the *siddha-sadhus*. So by 1912 the second line in the order was established with Gopal Das Baba and Ganeswara Das Baba[22]. The same year Sadhu Biswanath Das was

22. *Itihasa*, pp. 238—240. Also Lakshmi Narayan Sahu, *Mahima Dharmara Samkshipta Sara Katha*, Dharma Grantha Store, Cuttack, pp. 6-7.

initiated into the order by Siddha Nanda Das Baba. Along with him, a few other *apara sanyasis*, including Sharan Panjar Das Baba, Karunakara Das Baba, Chakradhara Das Baba and Dinabandhu Das Baba were initiated. So at the age of eighteen or nineteen, *apara sanyasi* Biswanath Baba started the *para sanyasa* way of life. He, therefore, earned the status of a *siddha-sadhu* and was called Biswanath Das Baba. Many dignitaries even address him as *Abadhuta Swami* and also as *Jnanasagar*. He is popularly known as Baba and also Brahmabadhuta Biswanath Baba.

He wears a small piece of the bark of the *Kumbhi* tree (*Careya arborea*) with an *adabandha* (belt round the waist) to keep the bark in place, and another piece of bark on his head. For more than sixty years, he lived a strictly disciplined life of celibacy. He has a tall, slim and lustrous body with an alert mind. He leads a simple life and moves about with a long stick and a fan made of palm-leaf.

Baba has now short matted hair on his head. But he had long matted hair as a *para sanyasi*. It is said that it flowed on to the ground even when he stood up. It is understood from the circle of *sadhus* that it rained at times when Baba washed his matted hair. It was unwieldy and caused him illness. It was, therefore, cut and buried in the second courtyard (*akhada*) of the Pithakhia Tungi in Athagarh (Cuttack district).

Sharana Darshana

"They are indeed *Brahmanistha* who have their *sharana darshana* with *jnana bhakti joga*". This is what is echoed by Baba in his *bhajanas*. He himself does *sharana darshana* as sincerely as he expects the devotees to do. His thought, speech and action are fully integrated.

Twice a day, during the morning and evening *brahmamuhurttas*, *sharana darshana* is a must for the Baba. In a clean place, free from din and bustle, Baba stands under

the open sky, with his hands joined together high above his head. The *para* and *apara sanyasis, bairagis* and *gruhi bhaktas* also join him. He has his *darsana veka* on. The prayer can be offered in groups or individually. Even in groups, each follows the usual prescription. They have to fall prostrate (*sastanga sharana*) seven times in the morning and five times in the evening. They face eastwards during the morning prayer and westwards in the evening prayer. The *pinda prana* is surrendered. Through surrender, *Brahma darshana* is realised. The sixty-four *siddhas* and the crores of *sadhus* are also offered *sharana*. After *Brahma sharana*, *sharana manya* is offered to Baba, and then it is done among *para sanyasis*, *apara sanyasis* and *gruhi* devotees. While receiving *sharana manya*, Baba says instantaneously, " Lord be kind" in response to *sharana ajna*.

Of the three-fold *sharana*, Baba takes up mental *sharana*. He sits in meditation. This is his *swatmayoga samadhi*.

The *Brahma sharana*, as shown by Mahimamaya Alekha Swami and followed by the *siddha sadhus* of the first order under His commandment, is thus kept intact. This has been explained in *Pratipadaka, Darshana Tattwa, Pradeepa, Exposition, Darshanam* (Vols. I andII) and other books. Baba has added nine stanzas of *Brahma sharana* in Sanskrit with an Oriya translation of each stanza. He has laid down the detailed procedure with supporting citations for *sharana darshana*. This has been his unique contribution.

Thus, in Mahima Dharma, the *abadhuta* order is maintained and continued through the years.

Odd and Oddity

To many, Baba looks odd. His body is completely uncovered except for two pieces of bark—one for maintaining his privacy and another placed on his shoulder, both known as *balkala kaupina veka*. Each piece is rather small, ranging from two to two-and-a-half cubits in length and from ten inches to one foot in breadth. Baba is indifferent

to heat or cold, day or night, and blast or breeze. During the night, he has, by his side, a fire, called *dhuni*, devoted to *Brahman*.

Equally indifferent he is to matters of taste. The tongue is fully under his control. He takes whatever food is available. There is a sense of quietude and self-satisfaction when he takes his meals. He does not prefer any particular item of food. Nor does he carry food with him. No food, not even a drop of water, is ever taken except under the open sky. On the ground, carefully cleaned and sprinkled with water, he calmly sits, with his left knee under his left armpit. It is a sight to see him take his food in containers made of green plantain leaves or in new earthen pots. The *parapara sanyasis* and *bairagis* as may be in company sit by his side.

He has two principal meals a day. This is his *bhiksha*. As food or water is forbidden after sunset and also before sunrise, he has plain water or water with lemon juice as his breakfast. He insists on taking food, the preparation of which entails no strain on the householder who offers hospitality. It should be a simple meal, easily available. Baba is a vegetarian, and the two meals he takes consist of rice, *dal* and vegetables. He lives on the simplest food. It is a stage of surrender to Brahman, but no submission to the sense organs.

All the items of food without exception should be served before they are offered to Brahman. Baba would not add any new item after he has started eating. He eats in small quantities. There is no hurry, though there may even be a shower approaching or a heavy shower of rainfall.

After taking his food, Baba generally prefers to drink lukewarm water. A new clay pot or plantain-leaf container, which he holds on his right palm, is filled with water, and he sips it to his satisfaction. After this, the *bhiksha* is over. The host is generally by his side to clean the spot

and remove the containers. Baba is eager to help in cleaning. Then he washes his hands, face and mouth. Standing with folded hands held above his head, he gently utters, " Mahima Alekha".

As he moves constantly, the school-house is the usual place of halt for the night. The children in the day and the community at night constitute his school. It was, indeed, strange that the village school building at Batagram, without doors and window shutters, was his place of halt on December 4, 1974 while he was on his way to Puri to attend the World Religious Conference. But it was no problem for him, because a *Brahma-samarpita* life radiates warmth to overcome the chilly winter night. However, in villages, inhabited by *Mahimashrit* devotees in large numbers, ordinarily one-roomed houses are built. They are *tungis*. The courtyard, demarcated by a compound wall, is the *akhada* used for *sharana* and *darshana*. But no food is taken inside. The outside *akhada* is used for eating. The place of halt is kept clean. It is besmeared with cowdung-mixed-water to ensure purity without cost. At the centre of the room (*tungi*) there is an elevated structure, almost square or circular, meant for *dhuni*. It is about two feet long and about three inches high. The circular structure has a radius of two feet approximately. In places other than the *tungi*, sand is generally used for the raised platform. The *dhuni* is kept burning for the whole night. The fire is extinguished and the spot is cleared before Baba goes for his morning *bhiksha*.

Squatting on the ground is his habit. That is how he does writing, meditation and discussion. He can do this for hours, say, five to six hours at a stretch. Baba walks barefoot. The use of sandals, made of leather or wood, or furniture of any kind is forbidden. He sleeps on uncovered ground and, in case of difficulty, uses a thin layer of straw or dried plantain leaves. Garlands and gaudy gates, made of coloured cloth, canopy and cloth coverings overhead are avoided. They are signs of luxury and comfort.

They have no place in a *birakta jibana* based on *tyagabairagya* in the Mahima *sanyasa* order.

Even while engrossed in discourses and discussions, Baba acknowledges the *sharana ajna* of the devotees and says, "Oh Lord, be kind". This is no interruption to him. I have felt that it is like a short-circuit through him between the person offering *sharana manya* and the *Parama Brahman.* The operation is instantaneous and has acquired the nature of a reflex. With Baba's touch and even the words, a new awakening is felt.

Baba is as simple as a child. His wisdom, depth of study and *sadhana* are bereft of any show. It is all inward realisation. His main concern is the *dharmadhama* and its continuity in purity and austerity.

Baba was very much liked by *siddha-sadhus* belonging to the first and second lines of the *para sanyasa* order. His sense of devotion and zeal for the maintenance of the *dharmadhama* and the spread of the cult are without question. It is now a mile-stone in the history of the faith.

Ever Firm and Dedicated

Baba is ever firm in the practice of the faith. His is a life of dedication, devotion and discipline. His thought, speech and action are one and the same, as they are directed to *Prabhu Parama Brahman.* He makes no secret of it. He lives with the people and in society. But he is ever detached. It is kind of conspicuous detachment.

One day, at Gadimandal, Baba was with a group of devotees. Nothing is more satisfying to him than this. Everybody was in saffron-coloured cloth. Some had shirts or napkins of the same colour. Baba would insist on the devotees putting on saffron-coloured cloth. Actually there can be no initiation without a piece of cloth, coloured in ochre. This is the cloth to be used during *darshana.*

External purity evokes purity within. Baba has justification for the practice[23].

Some devotees referred to the *siddha-sadhus* who initiated them to the faith. At this, Baba reminded them, "No matter who initiates, the *Guru* is one. He is *Eka Adwitiya Alekha Prabhu Parama Brahman.* Likewise, the Mahima Dharma Samaj is one, consisting of the *para* and *apara sanyasis, bairagis and gruhis.* It is also the only religion for mankind"

The same day, standing on the threshold of the *darshana akhada* of the *tungi* at Gurugadi, Baba slightly leaned towards the door to which a lock was fixed. He held the lock and said, "Be ever firm and dedicated". It is essential that the firmness and dedication of the followers should be as strong as the padlock, firmly locked. Baba insists on strict adherence to the commandments. Baba added, "The Lord has made the universe into a small room of His. We are His and we are in His universe. We have to be dedicated to Him".

Baba refers back to the individual and says, "*Parama Brahman* is One and Undivided. The whole being is to be dedicated. So also the whole family, village and, thus, ultimately, the mankind". This is the emerging concept of *sharana.*

In this connection, I may recall another incident. It was a rainy day. Baba waited for the rains to subside so that he would take his lunch under the open sky. The rains stopped and he took his meals, as usual. But again it started raining with full force before the meals were over. Everybody was worried. But Baba was steady. He was not even in a hurry. When anxious queries were made, how he would take his meals, he replied gently, "Let it rain, it is for the good of mankind". Nothing would deter him from the dedication to Brahman and the welfare of mankind. Mahima reveals Himself for the good of humanity.

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23. *Pratipadaka* and *Darshanam* may be seen.

A New Dimension

He has added a new dimension to the Mahima Cult by bringing it into touch with intellectual and academic circles.[24] Eminent scholars and writers of Orissa have contributed prefaces and opinions to the various writings by the Baba. For the spread of the religion, he has made numerous contacts and attended innumerable meetings for giving authoritative expositions. Since 1934, he has addressed a large number of learned bodies. In Cuttack, in addition to participating in numerous meetings and conferences, Baba's speeches at the Utkal Sahitya Samaj on November 9, 1934, the Town Hall on November 11, 1946 and the All-India Divine Life Conference on February 2, 1972 are worthy of mention. In Calcutta[25] too Baba gave a series of discourses on the non-dualistic philosophy of Mahima Dharma. His lectures at the Bangiya Sahitya Parishad on November 27, 1934, in the office of the Bengali Biswakosha on November 29, 1934 and at the Ramakrishna Mission on December 1, 1934 were well-attended and helped in clarifying the principles of the religion. On his way back, he addressed a conference at Kaptipada[26] on the invitation of the Maharaja of Mayurbhanj. He had made trips to Soro[27], Simulia, Balasore, Kharaswan, Saraikella and Jamshedpur on various occasions to impress on the people in general, and the intellectuals in particular, the salient features of the faith. The meeting organised at Berhampur during 1935 and in Ghumusar at different times have helped in the spread of Mahima Dharma in the district of Ganjam and its neighbourhood. Prior to 1943,

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24. Preface to *Itihasa* by Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, and preface to *Pratipadaka* by Ghanashyam Das. Also vide abstracts of Baba's books in Chapter III, *supra*.
25. Shri Prabhat Kumar Mukherjee, an eminent historian, made arrangement for the meetings.
26. For details of conferences at Calcutta and Cuttack during 1934, the preface to *Itihasa* may be seen.
27. Lakshmi Narayan Sahu, Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Sashibhusan Ray, who were eminent literary men of the State, used to make arrangements for the meetings.

Baba addressed several meetings at Visakhapatnam[28]. The conference on Mahima Dharma held at the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College in Koraput on May 5, 1971 and Baba's participation in it as well as in the World Religious Conference at Puri on December 5, 1974 are landmarks in the spread of the religion.

In addition to being a saint of the *abadhuta* order, living, moving and having his being in society, Baba is also a scholar among scholars in the pursuit of truth. His energy is indefatigable. He knows no rest in the task assigned to him.

In 1942, Baba in the company of thirty *sadhus*, including Anadi Charan Baba, went on an extensive tour for about a month in the Puri-Bhubaneswar area on the invitation of Baba[29] Achyutananda Das[30]. Each evening was devoted to *nama bhajana*, *ghrutahuti*, and discussion with the local people. Baba's freshness of approach and alertness of mind became a legend in the area. Likewise, His exposition in 1968 at Beguniapatna, near Kalikaprasad, in Nayagarh, in the district of Puri, was a great success.

Baba has initiated a large number of devotees to the Mahima faith. It can be said without any exaggeration that this has been one of his most noteworthy achievements.

In the course of his tours around the countryside, he has been able to set up a number of *Mahimashramas*. The land and the cost of construction are donated by the devotees. The *Mahimashrama Alekha tungis* at Banamalipur in Baramba set up in 1940, at Limbapatna in Khandapara in 1959, at Bindhanima in Tigiria in 1957, at Kalikaprasad in Nayagarh in 1964, and at Origarh in Bhanjanagar

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28. *Satya Mahima Dharma*, 1943, p. 33.
29. For a life sketch, see *Anadi Charan Baba* by Brahmabadhuta Shricharan Das Baba (1973). It has been prescribed as a prize and library book for educational institutions in Orissa.
30. He breathed his last on February 4, 1975.

in 1966 are worthy of mention. The inauguration of each was duly celebrated with a large assemblage of *parapara sanyasis* and *gruhi* devotees from the neighbouring villages. The readings of the authoritative texts and learned discourses were the usual features. Questions asked by the people present were answered by the Baba.

The period following the departure of the Sixty-four Siddhas from the visible world, *i.e.*, from about 1920 to about 1960, was critical for the continuance of the faith. The tempo created by the founder of the faith and His immediate followers had to be kept up. Divisive forces within the cult crept in. The feudal class of the time wanted to find out if the faith could stand the test of the intellectuals. The latter class, as they gained importance, looked for a rationale behind the belief. This was a definite challenge. Baba rose equal to the occasion. His scholarly expositions and interpretations in obedience to the Lord's commandments saved, so to say, the religion. Shri Narayan Mangaraj Mohapatra, Rajā Sahib of Baramba, extended an invitation to Baba in 1937. In his discourses at Baramba, Baba established how inner purity and devotion to the One, Undivided and Unalloyed Brahman can lead to *Jivanmukti*. He added that *Brahma darshana* is a right of the common man, right from the ruler to the ruled. There is no caste distinction. Baba held similar meetings in Athagarh, Khandapara, Baramba, Nayagarh and other places. Thus the new movement has gained in strength, support and popularity by his ceaseless efforts. That is why Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik observes that Mahima Dharma which is the glory and pride of Utkal has been so progressive and evolutionary that it will, perhaps, be one day at the highest among those who resort to formless worship in India.[31].

The momentum thus generated has to be stabilised. For this, Baba set up two organisations, *i.e.*, the Satya

31. Foreword to *Sadhu Giti* (No. 6 in Table A).

Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti and the Satya Mahima Dharma Grantha Kosha Samiti. The former was started on December 25, 1934 in the residence of Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj, the famous lexicographer at Cuttack. Baba became its adviser. It had its headquarters at Cuttack. Now its headquarters are at Bhubaneswar. It has a galaxy of learned persons as its members. It is responsible for a large number of publications. It also sponsors periodical discussions and discourses on Mahima Dharma. The Grantha Kosha Samiti was started in 1935. It was registered under the Society's Registration Act in 1973. Its membership includes *parapara sanyasis*, *bairagis* and *gruhi bhaktas*. Baba is its President. Its office is at Guru Mahima Gadi Mandal, Joranda. It generally meets twice a year. The annual meeting is held at the time of *Prabhu Poornima*. The Samiti is the repository of authoritative treatises on *Mahima Dharma*. Under Baba's guidance, it has also taken upon itself the twin task of collecting rare palm-leaf manuscripts for publication and reprinting *bhajanas* etc. of the *siddha-sadhus*, now out of stock.

Mahima Dharma—Visuddhadwaita Brahmabada

Baba's contribution to Indian theism is his concept of Visuddhadwaita Brahmabada as the essence of Mahima Dharma. This is a synoptic view point and has been analysed quite thoroughly in *Pratipadaka* and *Darshanam*. It has emerged out of an integration of the philosophical principles of Mahima Dharma as dictated by Mahima Mahaprabhu and the essence of all *Shruti-Shastras*. Baba is, therefore, the author of a school of philosophy in line with Sankara and Ramanuja. He has established the uniqueness of the Mahima cult as an unalloyed, non-dualistic philosophy in contrast to Sankara and Ramanuja, on the one hand, and Madhva and Vallabha, on the other. This has been eloquently discussed by Professor Ratnakar Pati in his introduction to *Darshanam*, Vol. I.

Baba has developed a school of philosophical thought[32] complete with a theoretical frame and the way of practice of the faith. He has made a systematic, comprehensive and codified presentation of the Mahima cult to the intellectual and thinking class. The larger volumes lay special and specific stress on certain aspects, *viz.*, *Itihasa* on the historical development, *Charitamruta* on biography, *Pratipadaka* and *Darshanam* on the philosophical and practical basis of the tenets and *Subha Karmavidhan* on the code of conduct, etc. The smaller volumes are usually in two parts, *i.e.*, (1) Mahima Swami and His life and teaching and (2) the principles, the order, etc. Baba's essays on Mahimagadi, Mahima Gosain and Mahima Dharma at pages 6388—6393 of the *Poorna Chandra Oriya Bhashakosha*, Volume V, are also important and interesting. Even the common practitioner draws strength and sustenance from them. Though comparatively young, this faith, ever true and eternal, is now on the world map of religions. The two volumes of the *Darshanam* are being translated into English and, as soon as the translation is published, the Dharma will gain worldwide recognition.[33]. It may well be said that Baba occupies a unique place in the history of the development of Mahima Dharma, similar to that of Sankara in relation to his Guru Gaudapadacharya or Sariputta to Buddha. He is the greatest authoritative exponent of the faith. Like Maharshi Badarayana who has presented in his *Vedanta Sutra* (*Brahmasutra*), the Upanishadic thoughts on a systematic philosophical base, Baba has codified the

32. *Orissa District Gazetteers*, *Dhenkanal* (Superintendent, Orissa Government Press, Cuttack, 1972), p. 2.

33. Writing about the founder of the cult, Mahima Gosain, Dr. Mayadhar Mansinha, one of the foremost writers of contemporary Oriya literature, says that the unfavourable environment out of which this iconoclast and heretic sprang up and the success with which he tried to establish a new moral order on earth through self-culture and ethical discipline, sternly eschewing the worship of any external object, make this obscure, illiterate man out of the jungle lands of Orissa, one of the most daring thought-leaders of India (*The Saga of the Land of Jagannatha*, J. Mohapatra & Co., Cuttack).

tenets and principles, rules and regulations of Mahima Dharma in *Darshanam* (Volumes I and II)[34].

Many misconceptions about the faith have been clarified by Baba. Many more misconceptions would have cropped up but for his untiring efforts. The theories that Mahima Dharma is an offshoot of Buddhism [35] or is a form of sun-worship stand today exploded. Baba has a probing eye to detect and clarify misconceptions, whenever they arise. It has, therefore, been possible for him to add substantially to the Vedantic literature in Oriya. The philosophical literature in Oriya has also been sufficiently enriched by his ceaseless efforts.

The Adhyaksha Sabha

The Adhyaksha Sabha is the highest body of the Mahima Dharma.[36] Baba is its president since 1943. Its members are some senior *para sanyasis*. It aims at the maintenance and continuity of the *samaj* strictly in obedience to the commandments of Mahimamaya Prabhu Paramabrahma. It is clear from the publications numbered 9, 10 and 11 in Table A, that its verdict on disciplinary measures and interpretation of the tenets are final and authoritative. It meets once a year during the Prabhu Purnima celebrations. It approves authoritative treatises like the *Darshanam* (Volumes I and II). It is now known as the Satya Mahima Dharmadhama Parichalana Samiti, its constitution, function, etc. remaining unaltered. It has been a registered body for the last twelve years. Now Satyabadi Das Baba is its Secretary. Senior *para sanyasis*, such as, Kshetrabasi Das Baba, Shricharan Das Baba,

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34. "Nibedan" by Dr. Kunjabihari Tripathy in *Darshanam* (*Uttarardha*.)
35. *Modern Buddhism and its followers in Orissa* by Nagendra Nath Basu.
36. Baba is the present head of the Order. See *District Gazetteer, Dhenkanal*, Orissa Government Press, Cuttack, 1972, pages 131 and 448. And also supplementary note 3 in *Satya Mahima Dharma*, edited by Nilamani Senapati, published by Dharma Grantha Store, Cuttack, 1975, p. 21.

Sambhunath Das Baba, Lochanananda Das Baba, Vasudeva Das Baba, Iswara Das Baba and others are its members.

Baba is extremely systematic and thorough. For all meetings of the Adhyaksha Sabha and the Grantha Kosha Samiti, of both of which he is the president, and even of the Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti, of which he is the adviser, he insists that the agenda and materials for discussion should be ready beforehand. He notes down the items of the agenda before they are given final form. The meetings of the Sabha and the Samiti start with the invocation *Guru Brahma Mahima Alekha.* The clapping of hands, which ordinarily accompany decisions and speeches elsewhere, is conspicuously absent.

In a neat spot, cleaned with cowdung mixed with water, the meetings are ordinarily held under the open sky. They are bereft of all pomp and decorative arrangements. I have seen Baba sitting with his left leg folded round the knee on the ground and the right leg resting on it. The right hand lies on the right leg, the knee and the elbow coinciding with each other. The left hand and the body rest on the ground, perpendicular to it. It is indeed his *Brahmanistha sadhana* that he can sit long in this manner while conducting meetings.

Baba encourages free and frank discussions. In the meetings of the Grantha Kosha Samiti, he looks up to the opinions of the members and even at times forsakes his own. He is never in a hurry to take a decision. He keeps himself open to hear different points of view. He has a rational outlook with regard to the different shades of opinion, particularly in controversial matters.

Practice and Preaching

Practice is indeed the key to the preaching of religion. Baba, therefore, puts great emphasis on the practice of the religion strictly on the lines of the Guru's command-

ments, and on preaching through practice. Practice and preaching, therefore, work in interaction. This is particularly typical of Mahima Dharma, which was born as a revolt against idolatry, ostentatious rituals and display of pompous rites. Even supernatural powers, which accrue out of sustained and strict practices, are treated as merely incidental and are given the least publicity. This reflects the personality of Baba.

Biswanath Baba spent seven to eight years travelling with Banamali Das Baba, Sharan Das Baba, Dinabandhu Das Baba, Nabina Das Baba, Jogendra Das Baba and Chakradhara Das Baba,[37] who were his colleagues in the *para sanyasa* order. But he spent most of the time with Dinabandhu Das Baba, as the latter did not like to travel alone.[38]. He simultaneously undertook the study of the religious texts and discussions on the principles of Mahima Dharma. His companionship with Dinabandhu Das Baba and Sharan Panjara Das Baba was extremely helpful in the understanding and the interpretation of its doctrine. Sharan Panjara Das Baba, in fact, urged him to write the first philosophical treatise, *Pratipadaka.*

Though young, Biswanath Baba was consulted about the Dharmadhama Samaj by Dinabandhu Das Baba, Sharan Panjara Das Baba and Ganeswara Das Baba during their travels. The *siddha-sadhus* used to describe the achievements of Mahima Swami and the *para sanyasa siddha-sadhus* of the first line. Biswanath Baba, who is gifted with a sharp memory, kept them written, as it were, in his mind.

37. See foreword to Brahmabadhuta Chakradhar Das Baba's *Mahima Dharma Sudhakara*, published by Sri Bidyadhar Sahu, Dharma Grantha Store, Cuttack, Mahimabda 124. The foreword is written by Abadhuta Ananta Charan Baba, Secretary, Mahima Samaja. There is a reference here to the discussion between Biswanath Baba and Chakradhar Baba, as to how the Dharma Samaja should be strengthened and the propagation of the tenets of the faith be speeded up one month before the latter gave up the moral coils.

38. *Charitamruta*, p.257.

We are told[39] that Ganeswara Das Baba used to press Biswanath Baba to write about Mahima Dharma in verse. He had written *bhajanas* in simple and colloquial Oriya. They were published under the title *Mahima Bhajana Mala* (Parts I and II). But Biswanath Baba would nôt write *bhajanas*, as there were already a large number composed by Bhima Bhoi[40], Jayakrushna, Madhu, Narana and some *siddha-sadhus*, like Kalu Das Baba, Khageswara Das Baba, Chakradhara Das Baba, Remananda Das Baba, Aniruddha Das Baba, Ananta Charana Das Baba and others. One day, Ganeswara Das Baba, Biswanath Das Baba and Ananta Charana Das Baba were halting at Kotar Tungi in Athagarh in the district of Cuttack. During their discussions, Ganeswara Das Baba repeated his request, and Ananta Charan Dâs Baba [41] supported him. Even paper and pencil were handed over to Biswanath Baba to start the work immediately. And thus was written *Sadhu Giti* (No. 6 in Table A) followed by *Tatmat Giti* (No. 22 in Table A) and other works in verse.

The simple form of presentation in rhymed lines is Baba's originality. There is no tinge of poetic flare. It is just reality, truth and introspection, three in one and one in three. To Baba, it is *satyam*, *jnanam*, *anantam Brahma*. That is his vision and verified truth ; that is also his reality and realisation. Due to the incessant foot-march, Baba developed pain in his right foot. It became acute during July, 1934 and he could not walk

39. *Op. cit.*, p.354.

40. All his published compositions are in verse. They provide the primary source materials on the faith. He has to his credit *bhajanas*, exceeding 300, each in six couplets. In addition, *Stuti-Chintamani* is most recited. It contains 100 *Bolis* of 20 stanzas each. The *Brahmanirupana Gita* contains 14 chapters. It is in the form of a dialogue between Nirakar and Shri Gurudeva. There are as many as 41 *chautisas*. The *Adianta Gita* has 12 chapters and the *Astak Bihari Gita*, 6 chapters, the former being a dialogue between *Jiva* and *Param*.

41. For a biographical sketch, see also *Anadi Ananta Smaranika* by Sadhu Golak Chandra Das, Bidyadharpur Mahimashrama, Cuttack, 1972.

long distances. The matter was considered by the *Dharma-dhama Siddhasadhu Mandal* and he was allowed to travel in a saffron-coloured rickshaw drawn by devotees.[42] The use of vehicles by *siddha-sadhus* is prohibited in *Mahima Dharma*, as comfort has no place in it. But Baba has been allowed to do so since 1934 on grounds of physical inability and only for the propagation of Mahima religion and its ideals.

The Challenge and the Response

The need for authoritative works on the Mahima tenets was, as explained earlier, long felt, because there was practically none right up to 1927. Such a humanistic movement of the 19th century, without codified principles and scientific analysis, was likely to be misunderstood and misused. Liberty and licence would be the order of the day, and the common man would be in utter confusion. The educated citizens, in quest of truth, would be left to battle in vain, as there would be no dependable code explaining the religion. Without authoritative treatises, the movement would also endanger its continuity.

Bhima Bhoi[43] was the first *gruhi* disciple of the Mahima Dharma. The great *Guru*, Mahima Mahaprabhu, who is acknowledged in Mahima Dharma as the only and the Supreme *Guru*, was his *Guru*. He was blind. He was bestowed with the *karuna* of Prabhu Parama Brahman. The blind Khond tribesman was blessed with eyes. Prabhu's commandments accompanied by three clappings on his head worked miracles. We are indebted to him for the

42. *Charitamruta*, p. 390; and also preface to *Charitamruta* by S. Nath.

43. For a critical discussion on the life and works of Bhima Bhoi, see forewords to (*i*) *Stuti Chintamani*, (*ii*) *Chautisa Madhuchakra* and (*iii*) *Brahmanirupana Gita* by Dr. Arttaballava Mohanty. The first two were published by the Utkal University in 1961 (5th edition) and 1972 (2nd edition) respectively, and the third by the Prachi Samiti in 1937.

bhajanas, jananas, chautisas and other books which were, till then, the primary sources of Mahima Dharma. They are all in verse and have a unique appeal. There is a magnetic touch in the lines. They are irreplaceable. They produce an emotional effect, almost second to none, in fostering a sense of oneness of the devotees with the Almighty. Others also wrote in similar style and vein. But these compositions could not serve as a compendium for the religion. A guide for the day-to-day conduct and practice was necessary. A philosophical system, laying down principles, methods and practice, had to be evolved. Without a system of thought and analysis, practice would be meaningless and mechanical.

Biswanath Baba's struggle for over fifty years was a response to a challenge. A *siddha-sadhu*, a life-long celibate and a *Brahmabadhuta*, he is gifted with an exceptional experience and a self-realisation based on the systematic study of scriptural texts and devotion of the whole being to the Immanent and Transcendent Lord. He has travelled far and wide, in and outside the State, explaining to theists, atheists and agnostics, the principles of the religion and is the author of twenty-two works. He has roped in the educated and the uneducated, the literate and the illiterate, and the intelligentsia and the common man. His books are monumental creations. They have gained recognition as authoritative texts. There can be no scientific study of Mahima Dharma without a reference to Baba. He stands supreme in explaining and interpreting Mahima Dharma to the east and the west.

On October 25, 1972 the Orissa Sahitya Academy offered felicitations to Biswanath Baba for his literary

44. Cf. Essays presented at the Interdisciplinary Seminar on *Mahima Dharma Darshan*, 1972, published by Shamkar Philosophy Association, D. A. V. College, Koraput; and K. M. Patra, "Religious Movement in Modern Orissa : Satya Mahima Dharma", in *Image*, Balasore, Vol.I, January 1976, pp. 49-57. Also Chittaranjan Das, *Utkalare Mahima Dharma*, Viswabharati.

achievements. But Baba stated that whatever books, including the treatises on philosophy, he has written are due wholly to the compassionate directions of the great Agent, who is All-knowing and All-pervading. He prayed to Alekha Parama Brahma to strengthen the Orissa Sahitya Academy in its efforts to develop Oriya literature.[45]

Programme for Future

Baba feels, as visioned by Krupasindhu Das Baba, that no attempt can completely describe the Unwritten and the Indescribable. So he has undertaken an endless and continuous programme of publications. With new visions emerging, he feels the necessity for fresh attempts. He is dynamic and creative in his approach. I gather that a manuscript on the history of Mahima Gadi is ready. He is planning to write a *Mahima Bhakti Sutra*. Many essays are pending publication. *Mahima Pratibha* and *Mahima Dharma Uddipana* are some of them. The third edition of the *Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa* (revised) was brought out in 1965. It is now outdated and the enlarged edition is under compilation. The Satya Mahima Dharma Grantha Kosha Samiti in both the meetings held during 1976 has decided to collect materials for this purpose.

Baba receives invitations daily to visit places in and outside the State. He has been invited to visit Sambalpur, Rourkela, Delhi and other places.

A creative mind, self-realised and Brahma-surrendered, is beyond human imagination. We can only surrender ourselves to Brahman to realise Himself through Baba.

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45. See slip attached to *Darshanam*, Vol. II.

CHAPTER II

BIBLIOGRAPHY

COMPLETE LIST OF BOOKS

(*arranged alphabetically*)

Table A

Sl. No.	*Title*	*Edition First/last*	*Year*	*Publisher*
1.	*An Exposition of Mahima Religion*	First	1958	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
2.	*Bhagabat Sara Satya Dharma*	First	1936	Ditto
3.	*Gruhasthashrama Subha Karma Vidhan*	First	1977	Ditto
4.	*Mahima Balyalila Giti*	First	1957	Ditto
5.	*Mahima Dharma Darshana*	First	1975	Ditto
6.	*Sadhu Giti*	First Fourth (Revised & Enlarged)	1932 1973	Ditto Ditto
7.	*Sariraveda Vedanta Sara Tattwa Siromanih—Alekha Param Brahma Darshanam (Purvardha)*	First	1968	Utkal University
8.	*Sarvaveda Vedanta Sara Tattwa Siromonih—Alekha Param Brahma Darshanam (Uttarardha)*	First	1973	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
9.	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	First	1941	Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj
10.	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	First	1943	Ditto

Sl. No.	Title	Edition First/last	Year	Publisher
11.	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	First	1946	Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj
12.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Darshana Tattwa*	First	1971	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
13.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa*	First Third (Revised)	1935 1965	Ditto Ditto
14.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Parichaya*	First	1958	Ditto
15.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Pradeepa*	First	1957	Ditto
16.	*Satya Dharma Pratipadaka*	First Fifth	1931 1974	Prachi Samiti Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
17.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Sacheta Vani*	First	1963	Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj
18.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Siddha Sadhu Charita-mruta*	First	1972	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
19.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Swarupa*	First Second	1938 1962	Ditto Ditto
20.	*Satya Mahima Dharma Tattwa Sara*	First Second	1935 1962	Ditto Ditto
21.	*Shrimat Chinmaya Brahma Gita*	First Second (Revised)	1939 1968	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti
22.	*Tat Mat Giti*	First Third (Revised & Enlarged)	1934 1969	Ditto Ditto

Table B

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE YEAR OF THEIR FIRST PUBLICATION

Sl. No.	*Year*	*Title*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	1931	*Satya Mahima Dharma Pratipadaka*	16
2.	1932	*Sadhu Giti*	6
3.	1934	*Tat Mat Giti*	22
4.	1935	(*i*) *Satya Mahima Dharma Itihasa*	13
		(*ii*) *Satya Mahima Dharma Tattwasara*	20
5.	1936	*Bhagabata Sara Satya Dharma*	2
6.	1938	*Satya Mahima Dharma Swarupa*	19
7.	1939	*Shrimat Chinmaya Brahma Gita*	21
8.	1942	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	9
9.	1943	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	10
10.	1946	*Satya Mahima Dharma*	11
11.	1957	(*i*) *Mahima Balyalila Giti*	4
		(*ii*) *Satya Mahima Dharma Pradeepa*	15
12.	1958	(*i*) *Satya Mahima Dharma Parichaya*	14
		(*ii*) *An Exposition of Mahima Religion*	1
13.	1963	*Satya Mahima Dharma Sacheta Vani*	17
14.	1968	*Sarva Veda Vedanta Sara Tattwa Siromanih-Alekha Parambrahma Darshanam* (*Purvardha*)	7
15.	1971	*Satya Mahima Dharma Darshana Tattwa*	12
16.	1972	*Satya Mahima Dharma Siddha Sadhu Charitamruta*	18
17.	1973	*Sarva Veda Vedanta Sara Tattwa Siromanih Alekha Param Brahma Darshanam* (*Uttarardha*)	8
18.	1975	*Mahima Dharma Darshana*	5
19.	1977	*Gruhasthashrama Subhakarmavidhah*	3

Table C

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE LANGUAGE OF PUBLICATION

Sl. No.	*Language*	*Serial Number in Table A*
1.	Oriya	2 to 22
2.	Hindi	19 & 22
3.	Telugu	13
4.	Bengali	16
5.	English	1 & 5

Table D

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING AS THEY ARE IN PROSE OR IN VERSE

Sl. No.	*Prose/Poetry*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	Prose	1, 5 & 7 to 20
2.	Poetry	4, 6, 21 & 22
3.	Both in Prose and Verse	2 & 3

Table E

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE SUBJECT

Sl. No.	*Subject*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	Philosophy	13 to 16 & 20, 1, 2, 5, 7 to 12, 14 to 17 and 21.
2.	History	13
3.	Biography	18
4.	*Bhajana*	4, 6 & 22
5.	History and Biography	15 & 18 to 20
6.	Code of Conduct	3
7.	Addresses and Speeches	5, 9 to 12, 15, 16, 17, 19 and 20.

Table F

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE PUBLISHERS

Sl. No.	*Publisher*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	Prachi Samiti	16 (First edition)
2.	Utkal University	16 (2nd, 3rd & 4th editions) & 7.
3.	Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti	1 to 6, 8, 12 to 15, 16 (5th edition) & 18 to 22.
4.	Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj	9 to 11 and 17.

Table G

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE SIZE OF THE VOLUME

Sl. No.	*Size of Volumes*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	Books less than 100 pages	1, 4 to 6, 9 to 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 22.
2.	Books between 100 & 500 pages	2, 3, 13, 18 & 21.
3.	Books exceeding 500 pages	7, 8 and 16.

Table H

BOOKS ARRANGED ACCORDING TO THE NUMBER OF EDITIONS

Sl. No.	*No. of Editions*	*Serial No. in Table A*
1.	1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 to 12 14, 15, 17 & 18.
2.	2	19 to 21
3.	3	2, 13, 22
4.	4	6
5.	5	16

CHAPTER III

ABSTRACTS OF BOOKS AND PAPERS

1. **Satya Mahima Dharma Pratipadaka** (No. 16 in Table A)

It is a philosophical exposition of the religion propounded by the author as a categorical statement (as it appears from the title *Pratipadaka*). The first edition was brought out by the Prachi Samiti, Cuttack[1] in two volumes, the second, the third and the fourth editions (1971) by the Utkal University in one volume, and the fifth edition (1974) by the Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti in one volume. It has a preface, dated the 20th January, 1931, by Professor Ghanashyam Das[2], Department of History, Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. It has been stated in the preface that the author has presented Mahima Dharma to the world as a cream by churning the sea of the Vedic nectar. He has given in a consolidated form the practices and principles of the cult, which are justified by the *Shruti-Shastras.* 1,302 *slokas* taken from these works in support of the Dharma have been quoted. The cardinal principles have been stated in a condensed form so that any casual reader can get a glimpse of the religion. They are 32 in number.[3]

This book of 510 pages has eight chapters, called *ullasas*, or discoveries, clearly describing the peculiarities of the Dharma. Why the *sanyasis* do not eat in metal pots or leaves of the banyan and peepul tree (p. 463), the kind of dress to be put on by a devotee in

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1. Founded in 1924 and registered in 1929 with the chief patronage of Shri Bhuiyan Bhaskar Chandra Mahapatra with the aim of developing Oriya language and literature. One of its main functions was to collect palm-leaf manuscripts, editing and publishing ancient Oriya manuscripts of great literary value. Dr. Arttaballava Mohanty was its founder member and made a distinct contribution.

2. Eminent historian and educationist. Planned the excavation of the Prachi valley and the establishment of the Orissa Museum.

3. See appendix.

the family (p. 325), and other practices have been explained with supporting arguments.[4]

The first chapter is anecdotal. The anecdotes have been taken mainly from the life of the founder, Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami. The author has cautioned that they are only incidental, lest the reader might attribute supernatural powers to Him. His main purpose is to save the religious and to destroy the irreligious (p. 40). The chief point of contention in the chapter is that Mahima is Himself the Supreme Lord of the Universe.

In the second chapter, the following concepts have been examined : *Mahima* ; surrender (*sharana*) in the bodily, oral and mental dimensions and in slow, steady and excessive degrees ; devotion to Brahman, etc. In conclusion, it has been established that surrendering to Brahman is the best, even according to the Koran and the Christian scriptures. The prayers to be offered have been given at pages 59, 60, 61 and 72 and are so appealing that anybody who goes through them cannot but be moved.

In the third chapter, the discussion on the concept of Brahman as nameless and formless has been continued. Mahima Dharma being partly a revolt against idolatry, the author has tried his best to establish that worship of Brahman is above all rituals, rites, qualities, etc. Further delineation of the *Brahma Darshana* has been made in the fourth chapter, and so the third and the fourth chapters are complementary. The only course left is to know and realise Brahman. Knowledge other than the knowledge of the Brahman is to be given up, as only that knowledge can lead to salvation through surrender to the Chinmaya Brahman. No worship based on distinction between *Jiva* and *Iswara* is to be attempted.

Having built a sound theoretical frame in the two preceding chapters, the author examines the validity of the

4. See the 5th edition (1974).

Satya Mahima Dharma in the remaining four chapters as indicated below :

(*i*) 5th Chapter—Mahima Dharma, a challenge to caste-discrimination.

(*ii*) 6th Chapter—Mahima Dharma for the householder.

(*iii*) 7th Chapter—Mahima Dharma for the *Abadhutashrama Sanyasagrantha*.

(*iv*) 8th Chapter—*Sanyasapantha* continued.

The 5th and the 6th chapters are devoted to an examination of the duties enjoined upon the householder, and the last two chapters to *sanyasa* and *gruhi* life, constituting a comprehensive whole in Mahima Dharma.

The 5th chapter deals with the (*i*) importance of getting up early in the morning and the purification of the body, both internal and external, (*ii*) food habits and (*iii*) practice of non-violence, truth, celibacy, control of passions, contentment, kindness, equanimity and avoidance of evil company, lust, sin, etc. It has been established in unequivocal terms that in *Brahma Bhakti* or Mahima Dharma as *Brahma Jnana Bhaktiyoga*, there is no distinction of caste, creed, etc. It is the one religion and the only way of life for the entire mankind. This discussion is continued in the 6th chapter with emphasis on the (*i*) relation between the *guru* and the *sishya*, (*ii*) qualities of the *guru* as devoted solely and wholly to Brahman, and (*iii*) way of life prescribed for the *gruhi* in the Mahima Dharma in respect of his dress, conjugal life, livelihood in the righteous way, education of sons and daughters, their marriage, etc.

As indicated earlier, the Abadhutashrama Sanyasa order is dynamic and evolutionary. It arose as an integral part of the Mahima Dharma, in reaction to the static and pleasure-oriented monastic order of the 19th century to continue and carry further the Abadhuta order

of the earlier years. It consists of three stages, *i.e.*, (*i*) renouncing worldly life and becoming a mendicant, (*ii*) the *Apara Sanyasa* order, and (*iii*) the *Para Sanyasa* order. The Abadhuta Sanyasi has to free himself from worldly attachment with the light of his conscience. This order is open to all irrespective of caste considerations. It is based on (1) indifference to pleasure in this life and the life to come, and (2) giving up the pleasant and accepting the desirable. The path of renunciation has been discussed. The method of initiation into the *sanyasa* order has been elaborated. An account of the *Apara Sanyasa* and *Para Sanyasa* orders has been given. In describing *tattwaviveka*, which posits that *atma* (soul) is true and immortal and anything else is false and mortal, it has been indicated that it will dawn as a result of the *sadhana chatustaya*.

Atma (soul) is interpreted as different from the three bodies (gross, subtle and casual), beyond the five *koshas* and transcending the *abasthatraya* (three-fold condition). In this context, the principles for establishing the oneness of *atma* and *Brahman* have been considered.

In the last chapter, the cardinal principles of the *Abadhuta* order have been discussed. Some of the important principles are : (1) No external show—avoidance of the sacred thread, garland, *tilak*, *kamandalu*, etc. (2) No *mathas*, *i.e.*, no *fixed* residences are to be owned for residing in one place for days together. (3) Spending one night in one village only, like an *atithi*, accepting food only once in one house. (4) Wishing well of the village and the people, *jagata* and *bhagata*. (5) Taking food under the open sky. (6) No food is to be stored. No food is to be cooked by the *sanyasi*. He should not order any kind of food to be specially cooked. (7) Eyes are to be fixed on the ground while going from one place to another. (8) Gold and women are to be avoided. (9) All men and women are to be treated as fathers and mothers respectively.

Justification of the Guru Mahima Mahaprabhu's commandments is attempted with quotations from the scriptures, the Vedanta and other spiritual texts. They show that they are not dogmatic and appeal to reason. Thus it has been established that meditation on unqualified Brahman (*Nirguna Brahmopasana*) leads to the attainment of Brahman whereas the worship of qualified Brahman (*Saguna Brahmopasana*) leads to the attainment of material prosperity. The *sanyasi* lives for the welfare of mankind.

There are not only chapter headings but also subheadings under each chapter with pages indicated against each for facility of reference.

As the fifth edition of *Pratipadaka* was brought out after the *Darshanam*, there are cross-references at certain places to the two volumes.

It is no exaggeration to say that *Pratipadaka* represents the Vedas, *Samhita* and *Gita* of Mahima Dharma[5], as Baba has given in it a definite shape to the principles which were till then indefinite.

2. Satya Mahima Dharm Itihasa (No. 13 in Table A).

This is a history of the development of the Satya Mahima religion since its inception in 1826, when the Founder, Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami, revealed Himself at Puri. The book is divided into five chapters, known as *prakaranas*. Param Brahman, who is second to none, who is unwritten, and who is upheld as the Absolute Lord to be worshipped, remembered and thought of in body, mind and speech, is infinite, endless and limitless. So the word *prakarana* used to indicate a chapter may be translated as a landmark or a milestone in the history of the religion.

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5. See foreword, dated 17-6-1932, to *Sadhu Giti* (No. 5 in Table A) by Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik.

This book has undergone three editions during 1935, 1954 and 1965. It is based on (1) materials obtained from *Abadhuta Siddha* Krupasindhu Baba, Nanda Baba, Niladri Baba, Anam Baba and others who moved in the company of Mahima Swami, (2) information given by *Gahania Bhaktas*, and (3) Baba's own role in the spread of the religion in later times. The preface, dated February 15, 1935, has been written by Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj[6] and Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik[7]. They have thrown light on certain landmarks in the spread of the religion. They have established that the faith was founded in Orissa prior to the Brahma Dharma.

The book contains 266 pages of text with 19 pages of foreword and 10 pages of contents. The treatment is descriptive with anecdotes from the life of Mahima Swami. They illustrate the supernatural powers of the founder of the religion. Some of the important anecdotes are (1) appearances of Mahamaya in the guise of a fierce lady ; (2) carrying logs of wood ; (3) walking of Govinda Das Baba (first disciple, belonging to *Para* Sanyasa order) on deep water ; (4) the prayer of Mother Earth to Mahima Swami to take rice (Chapter I); (5) giving life to the dead bodies of a man, named Madan, an ox of Daitari Samantarai of Bargarh, a boy of 12 years of age, a dog and a rat ; (6) the subsiding of flood waters in *mouja* Khandwali ; (7) creating a rivulet on the top of a hillock ; (8) Mahima Swami curing persons suffering from cholera ; (9) Swami being seated on fire ; (10) saving a beggar and the son of Gopal from the clutches of a tiger ; (11) Govinda Baba appearing in a dead dog at Darutheng ; (12) Baba losing his life and reappearing ; (13) milching a barren cow ; (14) Baba's body appearing in three pieces ; (15) granting eyesight to the blind ; (16) Baba walking through the waters of the Baitarani (Chapter II); (17) cholera being

6. Eminent lexicographer, satirist and litterateur.

7. Founder of Kalinga Bharati, devoted to the study of ancient Oriya literature, music, dance and culture.

cured ; (18) rain being caused at Khamar, Nuagan and Athagarh Gobara ; (19) Swami apearing as a lustre above the sacred fire (*dhuni*) at Malabiharpur ; (20) a baby being given skin ; (21) giving life to a dead boy and a dead Brahmin lady ; (22) childless Baluki Behera being blessed with a son ; (23) Swami assuming a huge watery form ; (24) Swami walking in the air on his way to Hindol and also to Bangula ; (25) Swami standing in the air at Mahadia Tungi as seen by *bhakta* Kanhai Gadanaik of village Budhapanka (Chapter III); (26) showing twelve suns at the dead of night ; (27) Swami walking in the air to Angarbandha ; and (28) Swami assuming numerous forms (Chapter IV).

The landmarks in the development of the religion as contained in the different chapters may be summarised as follows. Swami revealed Himself at Puri during 1826 as Dhulia Gosain after travelling over Dhauligiri, Khandagiri, Udayagiri, etc. He established Brahman as *nirguna* and *sachchidananda swarupa* at a meeting of the Muktimandap Pandit Sabha at Puri. He reached the top of Kapilas hill in 1838. While in *swatmayoga samadhi*, a tribal named Sadananda saw him and gave him fruits and roots for twelve years. At that time Govinda Baba became his first disciple and established the *parasanyasa abadhuta* order as he was graced with *balkala veka bana* by Swami himself. Govinda Baba travelled westward for the spread of the religion. Raja Bhagirathi Bhramarabar Bahadur of Dhenkanal met Swami and received *Brahmajnana bhaktiyoga*. He was directed to be a democratic and loving ruler. The Raja consulted his mother and wife and offered milk to the Swami for twelve years.

Mahima Swami met Bhima Bhoi along with Govinda Baba, who was at Bolasingha in Boudh, at the dead of night. The blind Kondh was graced to be a poet. He was initiated to be a *gruhi bhakta*. He became famous as a poet and the first lay disciple of Mahima Swami.

The second chapter starts with Mahima Swami's descent from the Kapilas hill in 1863 and his arrival at Kashipur, near the Brahmani river, where he ate rice for the first time from a devotee, Gangadhar Sahu, after his initiation into Mahima Dharma. Swami again went to Bhima Bhoi at village Gramadiha in Rairakhol and ate rice. Thus he proved that there was no caste distinction in *Brahma bhakti.* Then He arrived at Bolasingha and sent Hari Panda, Basudeva Panda and two others to Bhima Bhoi, who was to dictate *Mahima bhajanas*, etc. to them after their initiation into the Mahima Dharma. The Swami remained in *atmayoga samadhi*, did *tungi nirmana*, and initiated *bhaktas* into Mahima Dharma in various villages, like Patia, Damana and Khurda. While in village Andharua, near Khandagiri, Nrusingha Baba (second disciple of the *para sanyasa* order.) met the Swami. After Khuntuni, Damana was the second place where the sacred fire was installed and the seven *tyagis*, Nrusingh, Bhagaban, Bhagirathi, Madhabananda, Achyutananda, Krupasindhu and Krushnachandra, were, at the behest of Mahima Swami, initiated into *abadhutashrama para sanyasa* order by *Adisiddha* Govinda Baba.

Then in the company of Govinda Baba and Nrusingha Baba, Parama Guru Swami Alekha Parama Brahma went to Daruthenga and remained there in *atmayoga samadhi* for 21 days in a cave in Giripadapadma hill. The sacred fire was installed in Andharua and Daruthenga and the Swami went round various places. Govinda Baba breathed his last in 1867 at Daruthenga. Swami visited Malabiharpur, Kasipur, Dalijoda, Mangarajpur and other places. The sacred fire was installed at Malabiharpur.

In the third chapter, the popularity of the religion has been dealt with. Sixteen *murtis* became *para-sanyasis.* Thus the number became 92, including Nanda Baba. The names of the 92 *siddha-sadhus*, who belonged to the 64 *abadhuta siddha* order, have been given at page 140. The

number of *gruhi bhaktas* also went on increasing. Descriptions of Nanda Baba's initiation, Nrusingha Baba's arrest and imprisonment, and the spread of the religion to Angul, Hindol, Aul, Sambalpur, etc. make interesting reading.

In the fourth chapter, the initiation into the *apara sanyasa* order, which is a milestone in the development of the religion, is described. The number of *sanyasis* was eighty in number. With the initiation of Nanda Baba into the *para sanyasa* order, the Swami did not allow this order to continue. So under his commandment, Banchhanidhi Das Baba did the initiation at the new *tungi* at Jaka and set up the *apara sanyasa* order.

Women have not been allowed to join the *abadhuta sanyasa* order. They have, however, been commanded by the Prabuddha Guru to adhere to the rules of Mahima Dharma and to lead the Mahima way of life in their families.

The Swami relinquished his mortal frame and made himself invisible on Monday, the 10th day of *shukla* fortnight of Falgun in 1876 at 5.22 P.M. at Joranda.

In the last chapter, there is an account of the establishment of the Gadi Mandir at Joranda and the spread of the religion all over Orissa as well as in Indore and Midnapore. The revival of the *para sanyasa* order in 1912 by *Siddha* Nanda Baba and his death two years later are epoch-making events. More than one hundred *para sanyasis* formed the second line of *para sanyasa* order. As more and more *tyagis* joined the Dharma in 1925, the third line of the *para* and *apara sanyasa* order was constituted.

Since 1959, the Satya Mahima Sagar Dhuni Mandir has been functioning.

The main facts and the general principles of the religion, as given in the book, may be highlighted below :

(1) Mahima Dharma grew as a revolt against vested religious interests, monasteries and autocratic kings and rulers. It is against exploitation of any kind by caste or political hierarchy. The instructions given to Govinda Baba (pages 13 to 36) bear testimony to this.

(2) Certain practices, such as, *balyalila*, *dhunisthapana*, *satsanga gosthi*, etc. have been described.

(3) Mahima Dharma is opposed to attachment of any kind, such as, property, land, money, etc. The founder, Mahima Swami, had, throughout his life, as manifested from 1826 to 1876, carried on non-attached sport and manifestations (*niskama khelalila*). He stood for Satya Sanatan Mahima Dharma.

(4) Mahima Swami prohibited secluded life in a forest. The Dharma, therefore, advocates *Abadhutashrama* based on sacrifice, simplicity, austerity, celibacy, non-violence, truth, freedom from passions, etc. for the good of mankind and the devotees.

(5) There can be no initiation to *gruhasta dharma*, *tyagi* life and *para-apara sanyasa* orders without complete understanding and rigid practice of the religion. The emphasis is on *jnana-bhakti-karma-yoga*.

(6) Mahima Swami's commandment (page 129) that "there can be no caste if you are after salvation" shows that the Dharma was intended to be a common man's religion without any considerations of caste, at a time when society was highly caste-ridden.

(7) As the faith is a revolt against polytheism and idolatry, rituals and rites, it lays down that the Absolute Lord Param Brahma should be meditated on and none else.

3. **Bhagabata Sara Satya Dharma** (No. 2 in Table A)

The essence of *Shrimad Bhagabata* is *satya dharma*, and the Mahima Dharma is just that. This is the purport of the book. Further, Baba claims, in the preface to the book written in 1936, that, the essential principles of the *Bhagabata* are inherent only in Mahima Dharma in the present age. He has, therefore, made explicit in this book what is implicit in the *Bhagabata*, *i.e.*, the cause of action based on complete surrender to Brahman and its true principles.

It is admitted by scholars that the *Shrimad Bhagabata* is superior to all the the *Puranas*. It is also the only religious text which forms an integral part of the heritage of Orissa and is widely read and recited by all sections of the people. But, unfortunately, many practices are adopted in the name of the *Bhagabata Dharma* to perpetuate the irreligious and immoral activities. That is why the author has emphasised non-dual and formless *Brahmabada*, and the duties and conduct of householders and saints based thereon. Moreover, the Satya Mahima Dharma which was, so far, followed by the common folk has attracted the educated class on account of its identity with *sanatana* Hindu Dharma, and so its spread has become easier. This has been the contribution of Biswanath Baba, according to Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj who has written the foreword to the book.

The author's originality lies in the choice of the appropriate texts from the Sanskrit *Bhagabata*, according as they support the principles of Mahima Dharma, and in fitting the same into the relevant Oriya version of Jagannath Das (corrected and published by Rajakishore Das with interpolation of the material composed by Khadanga Dinabandhu Das). The meaning has been kept intact, as the author has assured the readers that no modifications or exaggerations have been attempted. In other words, one is impressed by the systematic and scholarly treatment of the theory and practice of Mahima Dharma.

The book has undergone three editions, the first in 1936, the second in 1950 and the third in 1966, published by the Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti. The material for the first edition was scrutinised by Dr. Lakshmi Narayan Sahu and, for the subsequent two editions, by Dr. Kunja Bihari Tripathy. Even the proofs were corrected by scholars of the eminence of Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj and Dr. Arttaballava Mohanty.

The book is divided into three chapters, called *adya*, *madhya* and *pranta* (beginning, middle and end). The first chapter highlights the theory, the second the methodology, and the third the practice of the cult. The first chapter has as many as 48 titles, the second 44 titles and the last 45 titles. Under each title, there is one and, in some places, more than one Sanskrit *slokas*. Footnotes, where necessary, with explanations of concepts, illustrations and comments on word meanings, have been added. Each chapter ends with a short summary.

The 135 pages of the first chapter deal with the essence of the *Bhagabata*, *i.e.*, one should take refuge in the unqualified Param Brahma. Anything other than this, including idolatry, cannot lead to salvation. Many readers and admirers of the *Bhagabata* do not accept the essence and indulge in popularly-held wrong beliefs and activities. Likewise, many monists point to the inessential ideas of the *Bhagabata* and speak ill of it. It is, therefore, to be studied for what it stands in essence. Shukadeva asks Parikshita to meditate on the Unqualified, Unmanifest and Formless Param Brahman. This is how Pruthu's doubts have also been clarified by Sanakadi.

The middle or the central chapter (pages 136 to 238) is devoted to methods of attaining *Brahmajnana bhakti-yoga*. The qualities of the Guru have been discussed. Violence to animals, theft, evil company, lust, drunkenness, gambling, etc. should be given up. Passions are to be kept under control. The sinful activities are to be avoided.

The Parameswara as the Unqualified and Undifferentiated one is to be felt and realised with own self (*atma-swarupa*) as Father, Mother and Guru. *Jama* and *niyama*, including non-violence, truth, etc., are to be practised. The practical aspects of the concentration of the mind have also been discussed.

The last chapter, up to page 350, highlights the practical aspects of the cult, separately for householders and *sanyasis*. Of the 45 titles in the chapter, 29 titles relate to the former and the rest to the latter. The thirty characteristics of the householder, who is devoted to the true religion, have been described in the words of Narada to Yudhisthira. An account of the persons who renounce the world (*birakta purusha*) has been given. The thirty characteristics of the *sanyasi* and the 24 characteristics as told by Abadhuta to Jaduraja have been cited.

It may be re-emphasised that all the essential principles of Mahima Dharma in theory, method and practice have been brought out with evidence from the *Shrimad Bhagabata*. The Mahima Dharma is, indeed, the *satya sanatana dharma* advocated as the essence of the *Bhagabata*.

4. Shrimat Chinmaya Brahma Gita (No. 2 in Table A)

It is a book in verse dedicated to the "Ever Eternal, One and the Only One and the Supreme Consciousness", who is free of all names, forms, without beginning, without end, pure, sedate and void of organs. He is the First cause. Hence the title of the book is *Shrimat Chinmaya Brahma Gita*. It is written in the *puranic* style with rhymed verses, a caption for each chapter and a summary at the end. Each stanza consists of two lines, each of fourteen words. The author does not follow a conversational style. His is a descriptive and expository approach.

This book of one hundred and fifty-two pages consists of twelve chapters.

The first chapter of one hundred verses explains the concept of Brahman with prayers. In the second chapter, there is an account of the pure and selfless Bhakti cult (*visuddha niskama bhakti yoga*) which is the characteristic of the Mahima religion. For this, the importance of the company of the holy men, the study of relevant holy books, and practices leading to self-experience has been emphasised. The four kinds of salvation, especially the one leading to the Supreme Abode and the Supreme Foot (*Parama Dhama* and *Parama Pada*), which result from pure knowledge and pure devotion in the pure intellect, have been discussed. Thus the second chapter of 204 verses contains an adequate discussion on the pure and selfless cult of devotion as a means of attaining the Foot dispelling all fears (*abhaya pada*) and of freeing oneself from wordly ties (*bhaba bandhana*). For this, practice is necessary as well as devotion and meditation. The theory of action based on purity and selflessness has been discussed in the third chapter. It has 102 verses. The attributes of the theory, mainly in relation to freedom from ego, have been clarified. For both devotion (*bhakti*) and practice (*karma*) of the above kind, knowledge of Brahman (*Brahma jnana*) of the selfless type is necessary. The fourth chapter of 118 verses deals with unalloyed *jnana yoga* and Brahman as Truth after throwing off completely the ignorance of illusion. The realisation of the Vedantic principle that only Brahman is truth, knowledge and infinite (*satyam jnanam anantam brahma*) is indeed *Brahma jnana*.

The subsequent two chapters, *i.e.*, the fifth and the sixth, are correlated, dealing respectively with the attainment of the balance of mind and the avoidance of the imbalance of the mind. The ways of achieving equanimity by getting rid of worldly ties, and the ways of attaining Brahman have been discussed in the fifth and sixth chapters in 210 and 140 verses respectively. Idol worship and anthropomorphism, *i.e.*, the attribution of human qualities to God, of course, stand in the way of becoming one with

Brahman. Both the chapters highlight the importance of oneness with Brahman through practice based on truth and knowledge.

Then in the seventh chapter, containing 125 verses, the duties of the householders have been discussed. The cycle of human life and the theory of creation come up for discussion in the 100 verses constituting the eighth chapter. The ninth chapter with its 150 verses is devoted to *tattwaviveka vijnana yoga.* The highest principle (*parama tattwa*), and the only one, is the One Supreme Lord, and everything else is illusion and ignorance. All creations, both animate and inanimate, visible and invisible, emanate from Him. He is indestructible whereas everything else is subject to decay and destruction. Real salvation lies in surrendering oneself to One Brahman. Quite akin to this is the discussion on *viveka bairagya* and *sadhana mumuksha yoga* delineated in the tenth chapter, consisting of 168 verses. Through renunciation, the salvation of the soul in attained. It has also been established that one who gives up the company of the holy men and indulges in wordly pleasures is deprived of salvation.

In the eleventh chapter, the duties of the saints belonging to the Mahima Dharma have been discussed. In 213 verses, the initiation into the *para and apara sanyasa* orders, the practice of the *jnana yoganga*, etc., have been discussed. The revelation of Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami in Orissa and his establishment of the Satya Mahima Dharma with emphasis on One Brahman, second to none (*Visuddhadwaita Veda*), have been discussed in the 100 verses of the concluding chapter.

This book is the *Gita* of the Mahima *sanyasis* and has to be read and re-read as a text. The introduction to the book has been written in a scholarly manner by the eminent scientist, Dr. P. Parija, the then Principal of the Ravenshaw College, Cuttack. He has shown that Mahima Dharma is distinct and different from Buddhism and

arose as a revolt against priesthood. The key concepts used in the book have been discussed in *Pratipadaka* and elaborated in *Alekha Brahma Darshanam.*

5. **Sadhugiti** (No 6 in Table A)

It is a collection of 37 *bhajanas*, some of which are meant to be recited exclusively in the morning *Brahma Muhurtta* and others in the evening *Brahma Muhurtta.* There are also certain other *bhajanas* arranged in the alphabetical order, starting with the vowels. Each line in the *bhajana* begins with an alphabet. The first *bhajana*, in the booklet, entitled *Prata Smarana*, with 16 stanzas, each of four lines, and the 8th *bhajana*, entitled *Sayana Janana*, with 16 stanzas, each of two lines, are very popular. They form part of the *Brahma sharana* of the devotees. In some cases, the *ragas* have been indicated. Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, Secretary of the Prachi Samiti, has written a brief foreword. This is the first attempt at writing *bhajanas* by the author. There is an appendix of the difficult words and technical terms used in the text with their meanings and explanations in each case.

6. **Tat Mat Giti** (No. 22 in Table A)

It is a poem of 102 stanzas, each of three lines. *Hee Tat Mat* ("Oh, the father and the mother") constitutes the second line in each stanza and forms the burden of the song. Hence the title of the pamphlet. The opening line of the first stanza refers to Prabhu Param Brahma as Truth and as the eternal creator (father and mother) of this self and the entire animal kingdom. This is a song addressed to all men and women in the world (*Tat Mat Giti*) to understand, accept and practise the Mahima Dharma. In this cult, the *sanyasis* and the householders are instructed to treat and address all men and women as fathers and mothers, the most affectionate and respectful terms in the Indian cultural life. The poem is, therefore, a touching appeal by the poet to make the best of human life, which

is rare but transitory. The concept of the Brahman has been clarified in stanzas 36-42, and the main principles of the religion for adoption in daily practice have been stressed. The idea that the essence of all the classical texts is the Satya Sanatan Mahima Dharma, in which there is no scope for deeds and practices calculated to gratify any worldly desires (stanza 12), is understood. Biswanath Baba's appeal stands on its own merit. However, I have added an appeal as an introduction to the poem.

7. **Mahima Balyalila Giti** (No. 4 in Table A)

It is claimed in Mahima Dharma that its founder, Sarvaguru Param Brahma, descended of his own accord from the all-pervading Great Void. In the course of his revelations, he conducted *balyalila* (children's programme of sport). The full details of the programme have been explained by the author in this pamphlet of 21 pages. It has a foreword by Dr. Lakshmi Narayan Sahu,[8] the then Secretary of the Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti. It is in verse and in two parts. The first part consists of four poems, elaborating the details of the programme and the manner of its performance. The second part consists of seven *bhajanas* to be sung together (*gahana geeta*) at the time of *balyalila*. The entire programme is an act of commitment and dedication to Mahima Alekha Brahman in thought, speech and action. The last two *bhajanas*, each of twelve stanzas, are extremely touching and deal with *Brahma sharana*.

8. **Satya Mahima Dharma Siddha Sadhu Charitamruta** (No. 8 in table A)

This is a study in biography, supporting and supplementing the account of the development of Mahima Dharma as given in *Itihasa* (No. 12 in Table A). The author has drawn the materials from three sources : (1) what he

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8. A devoted scholar, writer, social worker and member of the Servants of India Society, Poona (Pune).

had heard from the *siddha-sadhus*, (2) what he has himself experienced, and (3) what he is seeing and what is happening. The data collected from these three sources form the contents of chapters (*sargas*) I, II and III.

Accordingly, in the first *sarga*, a biographical study of the *Abadhutashrama Sadhu Para Sanyasi Babas* starting from *Siddha* Govinda Das Baba, the *Adi Siddha* (the first self-realised), to *Siddha* Nanda Das Baba, has been attempted. The admission to this order of the *Sanyasa Pantha* was stopped under the directions of Mahima Swami. Thereafter, *Siddha* Banchhanidhi Das Baba initiated, as directed by the Parama Guru, the *niskami bairagis* (the selfless mendicants who renounced the worldly life) to the *Apara Sanyasa* Order at Jaka Tungi. Such *sanyasis* were entitled *Dasa*. Thus the *Para* and *Apara Sanyasa* Orders were created under the direction of Mahima Swami. The first 244 pages of the book, constituting chapter I, contain a detailed account of the first order in respect of the supernatural powers exercised by them, and their participation in and obedience to the detached manifestations of Mahima Swami for the founding and spread of the Satya Sanatan Mahima Dharma. The social and religious history of the period up to 1912, when the initiation into the second *Para Sanyasa* Order of those who had been initiated into the *Apara Sanyasa* Order was revived by *Siddha* Nanda Baba under orders from the Great Void, has been covered.

The second chapter is devoted to the account of the *para sanyasa siddha sadhus*, who were initiated next to the first line of *siddha sadhus*, till the third occasion for the initiation into *Para Sanyasa* Order occurred. The initiation of second and third lines of the *Para Sanyasa* Order was done at Guru Pitha Mahima Gadi. Unlike the first and second chapters, the third chapter is rather brief as it deals with the role of the *siddha sadhus* who are now alive.

Unlike other biographical studies, there is a deliberate and conspicuous absence of discussion on the parentage, early life, place and date of birth, etc., of the *siddha sadhus*, the *sadhus* and *bairagis*—deliberate, as it is a self-imposed discipline accepted as a practice of non-attachment and selflessness ; and conspicuous, as all biographies pay due attention to these details. The emphasis is on achievement in relation to the *guru ajna* (*guru's* commandments). Furthermore, although initiation has been made by different *siddha-sadhus*, the one and only one *guru* is Guru Brahma Mahima Alekha, who is second to none.

During the daily *Brahma sharana darshana*, *sharana* is offered to the sixty-four *siddha-sadhus* and the *sadhu sanyasis* who uphold and carry forward the *veka vana*, which represents the ideology of the Satya Sanatana Mahima Dharma. So the book not only gives us a fund of information for the study of Mahima Dharma, its development and practices, but also helps in understanding the faith of the devotees. There is a foreword of seven pages written by me on the direction of the Baba. I have drawn attention to some popular terms, used in the practice of the religion, to throw light on its origin, development and philosophy. I have also referred to the Baba's contribution to the spread of the religion. The manuscript was started by Baba in 1965, completed in 1969 and published in 1971.

9. **Satya Mahima Dharma Tattwa Sara** (No. 20 in Table A)

This is a brief introduction to Mahima Dharma. Biswanath Baba's speech at a meeting organised by the Utkal Sahitya Samaj, Cuttack, on November 9, 1934 under the chairmanship of Shri Gopal Chandra Praharaj has been published in the form of a pamphlet of 20 pages. It tries to prove that Mahima Dharma is neither a form of Buddhism nor sun worship. It is unalloyed and pure Hindu Dharma, aiming at the attainment of Brahman by killing all desires and completely surrending oneself to One Param Brahman. It is the Satya Dharma based on the

essence of the Vedas and the Vedanta. Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, Secretary of the Satya Mahima Dharma-lochana Samit, has written the foreword.

10. **Satya Mahima Dharma Swarupa** (No. 19 in Table A)

It is a pamphlet of 21 pages, explaining the meaning and the importance of Satya Mahima Dharma. The main points of discussion are : (1) Satya Mahima Dharma as pure and unalloyed *Brahmabada*, (2) its instructions, (3) its religious principles, and (4) the founder and his detached manifestations. As many as 20 Sanskrit *slokas* have been quoted from the *Shruti-Shastras*, with their meanings, to justify the main tenets of the religion. This was prepared for the author's speeches at different places in Orissa, Bihar and West Bengal.

11. **Satya Mahima Dharma Pradeepa** (No. 15 in Table A)

This publication owes its origin to the speech delivered by the author at a conference held on November 21, 1946 at the Cuttack Town Hall. It was presided over by Pandit Lingaraj Misra, the then Education Minister of Orissa. It was attended by such dignitaries as Shri Nabakrishna Choudhury, Revenue Minister, Shri Nityananda Kanungo, Law Minister, Shri Bichhanda Charan Patnaik, Government Translator, and others. The pamphlet is in two parts. This first part is on Shrimad Prabuddha Guru Mahima Gosain and his life, covering the first five pages, and the second part is on Satya Mahima Dharma (Pure Hinduism) and its principles and precepts, covering the remaining 29 pages. The words *satya*, *mahima*, *dharma*, *Brahman*, *sharana darsana niti*, etc., have been explained. The duties of the householders, who seek protection of the all-sheltering Lord of the Universe, have been spelt out. The *abadhutashrama sanyasa* Order is based on the practice of *amanitwadi jnana sadhana* and self-search (*atmanusandhana*), and this has been explained with reference to the text on the principles of *abadhuta sanyasa* Order.

In the foreword, there is a reference to the speech made by Shri Nabakrishna Choudhury, who said that he was drawn to the faith when he noticed the social change among villagers under the influence of Mahima Dharma as they were imbued with Upanishadic ideas. He felt that the religion should be spread far and wide as it has helped the villagers to do away with all discrimination and distinction and to live the true and righteous life.

12. **Satya Mahima Dharma Parichaya** (No. 14 in Table A)

It is a 32-page pamphlet, introducing Mahima Dharma in a short and elementary manner. It deals in two sections with (1) Guru Mahima Swami and (2) Satya Mahima Dharma. The second section has two sub-sections on the daily life and duties of the householders and the *sanyasis*. The entire pamphlet is descriptive and has been recommended as a prize and library book for High and Middle English Schools by the Director of Public Instruction, Orissa. There are three *bhajanas*, of which two are to be recited in the morning and the third in the evening during the daily *sharana* and *darshana*. One of the hymns to be recited in the morning has been taken from *Shrimat Chinmaya Brahma Gita*, chapter II, verses 40 to 110, and the other two have been taken from *Sadhu Giti*. They are generally recited by the devotees.

13. **Satya Mahima Dharma Darshana Tattwa**[9] (No. 12 in Table A)

Like the publications bearing serial numbers 14, 18 and 19 (Table A), this pamphlet is also based on the author's inaugural address at the seminar on Mahima Dharma held during 1971 at the Dayananda Anglo-Vedic

9. The original text of the inaugural address has been reproduced in the report of the Interdisciplinary Seminar on *Mahima Dharma Darshan* by Shamkar Philosophy Association, D.A.V. College, Koraput, 1972.

College, Koraput. The seminar was directed by Dr. Ganeswar Misra, Senior Professor and Head of the Post-Graduate Department of Philosophy, Utkal University, and attended by scholars of the Utkal, Berhampur and Sambalpur Universities and other intellectuals. The author not only inaugurated the seminar but also attended it in all the three days to clear doubts and answer questions.

The pamphlet runs into 38 pages. Within its short compass, it covers the entire spectrum of the religion. It is, indeed, an authoritative exposition of the theory of the religion. The topics cover a wide range of subjects : (1) *Visuddhadwaita Brahmabada* (theory of Brahman based on unalloyed non-dualism), (2) concept of Brahman, (3) the views of the dualists and non-dualists regarding the attributes of Brahman, (4) the theory of creation as propounded by Shankara and in Mahima Dharma, (5) commitment to the Supreme Divinity, (6) the code of conduct of the devotees, surrendering themselves to the protection of Brahman, (7) the two-fold *ashrama*, *i.e.*, the householders and the *sanyasa* Orders in Mahima Dharma, (8) the philosophy of unalloyed non-dualism (*Visuddhadwaita* philosophy), (9) idol-worship, and (10) objectives of the philosophy of unalloyed non-dualism. In the discussion on the theory of creation, which is a key concept in the philosophy of the religion, quotations from Shankara, Upanishads, such as *Taittiriya, Brihadaranyaka*, *Swetaswetara*, *Katha*, *Chhandogya*, etc., *Yogavasisthya*, *Yayurveda*, Bhima Bhoi's works and other *Shruti-Shastras* have been given to establish the singularity of the Mahi a point of view.

Shri Karunakar Sahu, who presented a paper in the seminar on the regulations for householders[10] in Mahima Dharma, has given a resume of the three-day discussions with particular reference to the clarifications offered by Biswanath Baba. Some of the important points dealt

10. *Op. cit.*, pp. 68-76.

with are : (*i*) whether Bhima Bhoi was blind, (*ii*) whether the reported incident of three women with 15 Kumbhipatia *sanyasis* attacking the Jagannath temple at Puri in 1884 is correct, (*iii*) whether Mahima Dharma is a kind of sun-worship, (*iv*) why Mahima Dharma was founded in Orissa first, (*v*) the significance of the distribution of *Mahima prasad*, (*vi*) the importance of *Satsang Gosthi*, etc.

14. **Satya Mahima Dharma Sacheta Vani** (No. 17 in Table A)

The text of this booklet of 55 pages was read at a meeting of the Adhyaksha Sabha of the Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj in 1957 and approved by it. According to it, the message of Satya Mahima Dharma is to be constantly conscious of the correct approach to the religion, strictly in accordance with the commandments of Guru Mahima Swami.

The Mahima Dharma society, consisting of householders and *sanyasis*, is one and indivisible. No personal or partisan approach is to be adopted.

Mahima Swami, the founder of the religion, put on *balkala veka vana*. The word *kasa-kaupina* used by Bhima Bhoi is nothing but *balkala veka vana*. According to instructions, *dora kaupina* is to be given up by the *sanyasi* who is to be graced with *balkala veka vana*. To establish the importance of *balkala veka vana* as a sign of superior *sadhana* and strict adherence to the Guru's orders, the relevant *bhajana* of Bhima Bhoi has been cited.

After *Brahma sharana* and *darshana*, the 64 *siddha-sadhus* and the countless *sadhus* are to be remembered in meditation. The significance of this has been explained.

The concept of *Omkara* and its place in Mahima Dharma are often misunderstood. This has been clarified

with quotations from the authoritative texts. The use of words, like *Ekakeshara* and *Nirbeda* in Mahima literature, particularly in Bhima Bhoi's writings, has been correctly interpreted. These are the key concepts, and their correct interpretation is necessary.

Bhima Bhoi, who is the first *bhakta kabi*, is sometimes, by mistake, taken as the first propagator and also founder of the religion. This impression has been corrected, and it is shown that Mahima Swami is the founder. Bhima Bhoi helped in the spread of the religion.

The difference between cloth and *kaupina*, the criteria for *sanyasa* life, and the method of putting on *dora* and *kaupina* have been brought out. Walking under gateways decorated with cloth is forbidden. So also the use of public transport and vehicles. It has, further, been forbidden to light the sacrificial fire (*yagayajna*) and resort to other Vedic rites, rituals and formalities. In this context, the significance of *dhuni* has been explained.

15. **Satya Mahima Dharma** (No. 9 in Table A)

Out of the 20 pages of the pamphlet, fifteen pages cover the presidential address of Biswanath Baba on February 2,1941 at the three-day annual conference of Satya Mahima Dharma held at Mahanityapura Mahima Gadi. In the address, the importance of Prabhu Poornima has been explained. It has been emphasised that the day is not observed to mark either the revelation or disappearance of Prabuddha Guru Param Brahma. The Mahima Samaj, consisting of the *parapara sanyasis*, *bairagis* and *gruhis*, is asked to lead a disciplined and regulated life, so that the *dharma* and the *dhama* remain intact in greatness and glory. The directions issued by the Siddha-Sadhu Mandali in their conference held from February 13 to 16, 1941, under the chairmanship of Biswanath Baba, have been embodied in the last five pages of the pamphlet.

16. **Satya Mahima Dharma** (No. 10 in Table A)

It is a booklet of 34 pages containing : (*i*) the directions issued by the Adhyaksha Sabha of the Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj on February 16, 1943 ; (*ii*) the presidential address of Biswanath Baba ; (*iii*) the address of Ananta Charan Baba ; (*iv*) the directions of the Adhyaksha Sabha; and (*v*) vote of thanks by Pitambar Baba, Secretary of the Samaj.

Baba's address clarifies many important issues, such as, the Samaj, the Guru and his *Brahmabada.* In addition to profuse quotations from Bhima Bhoi, there are many quotations from Kalu Chandra Baba and Khageswar Baba. It is incorrect to say that the Mahima Samaj is excluded from the Vedas and the Vedanta, as the commandments of Guru Mahima Swami represent the essence of all the authoritative *shastras. Brahma* used in Bhima Bhoi's *bhajanas* has been interpreted as *Poorna Brahma.* Mahima Mahaprabhu has commanded that the term *Parama Prabhu* is not correct. It should be *Parama Brahma Prabhu.*

17. **Satya Mahima Dharma** (No. 11 in Table A)

The pamphlet contains : (*i*) Biswanath Baba's presidential address at the Gadi Mandal Adhyaksha Sabha held on February 5, 1944 ; (*ii*) the directions issued by the Sabha and the procedings of its meetings held on February 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 12, 1944 ; (*iii*) the vote of thanks to the president ; and (*iv*) the directions given by the Adhyaksha Sabha on January 24, 1945 and February 13, 1946.

In the presidential address (*i*) *sharana*—its meaning, implications, three-fold type, etc., (*ii*) the absence of personal possession and the right over the Gadi Mandal, and (*iii*) the oneness of the *dharma* and the *dhama* have been discussed.

Of the Babas who constitute the Mahima Samaj Adhyaksha Sabha, the names of the 25 Babas have been given.

18 & 19. **Sarva Veda Vedanta Sara Tattwa Siromonih, Alekha Param Brahma Darshanam (Purvardha** and **Uttarardha)** (Nos. 7 and 8 in Table A)

As the title implies, the volumes contain the essence of all the Vedas and the Vedanta. They deal with the doctrine of Alekha Param Brahman, which is the philosophy of Satya Sanatana Mahima Dharma. A more detailed, elaborate and deep discussion than what is given in Biswanath Baba's first book in prose, *i.e.*, *Pratipadaka*, and his publication in verse, *i.e.*, *Gita*, has been made.

A study of the religion involves the study of (1) its philosophy, and principles, and (2) its tenets. These, again, consist of (1) a theoretical frame, (2) methods, and (3) practices. The first volume dwells at length on the theory of the religion, and the second, on its methods and practices. The two books are, therefore, complementary.

In each volume, there is a preface written by the author together with an appendix recording the approval of the Satya Mahima Dharma Samaj Adhyaksha Sabha. The author started writing it in 1943, and the manuscript of both the volumes was ready by 1952. The first volume was brought out by the Utkal University in 1968, and the second, by the Satya Mahima Dharmalochana Samiti in 1973.

Professor Ratnakar Pati has written a scholarly foreword to the first volume. In addition, there are opinions by Dr. P. Parija, Dr. Sadasiv Misra, Dr. Harekrushna Mahtab, Shri Radhanath Rath and Shri Satrughna Nath regarding different aspects of the religion. The foreword to the second volume has been written by Dr. Ganeswar Misra, Senior Professor and Head of the Department of Philosophy of the Utkal University. He has

highlighted the peculiarities of the religion. Learned opinions of Shri Biswanath Das, Dr. Kunjabihari Tripathy, Professor B. Das, Dr. Devendra Chandra Misra, Shri Gouri Kumar Brahma, Shri Sradhakar Supakar, Dr. Manmath Nath Das, Dr. Gourang Charan Naik, Shri Chittaranjan Das and Shri Satrughna Nath have been incorporated. They cover a wide range of topics, such as, the aim of Mahima Dharma, Mahima Dharma in modern times, special features of Mahima Dharma, Mahima Dharma in the historical perspective, philosophy of Mahima Dharma, etc.

Each of the two volumes starts with a nine-stanza *Brahma sharana* in Sanskrit with its rendering in prose in Oriya. There are two appendices to the second volume. The first appendix relates to the cardinal principles of Mahima Dharma. They are 32 in number[11], and are on the lines of the principles appended to *Pratipadaka*. The second appendix contains a list of the *shastras* referred to in the two volumes. These *Shruti-Smruti* and other *shastras* referred to by the author are 217 in number. The *sutras* and the *slokas* quoted in the volumes number 4,250 . Like the other scholarly treatises, these two volumes have not only topics of each subfoot but also itemwise postulates for ready reference.

An analysis of the contents of the two volumes is given below.

11. See Appendix I.

PURVARDHA

(Volume I)

Foot	Sub-foot	No. of postulates/hypotheses	No. of pages	TOPIC
1	1	25	75	*Yoga* of Pure knowledge.
	2	20	76	*Yoga* of the Science of Creation
	3	42	93	*Visuddha Tattwa Viveka Jnana Yoga.*
	4	15 (102)	61 (305)	*Saguna Nirguna Tattwa Bichara Yoga.*
2	1	25	82	*Mahavakyadi Tattwa Nirupana Yoga.*
	2	31	159	*Yoga* of Pure self-knowledge and devotion.
	3	46	107	*Satya Mahima Dharmashrita Visistachara Niti Yoga.*
	4	19 (121)	61 (409)	*Yoga* of mind control.
2	8	223	714	

UTTARARDHA

(Volume II)

3	1	29	97	*Yoga* of self-knowledge *versus* idol-worship.
	2	29	86	Doctrine of Rebirth.
	3	14	53	Doctrine of pure and detached action.
	4	59 (131)	144 (380)	Doctrine of pure and detached action.
4	1	20	49	Theory of renunciation and discrimination.
	2	19	72	The *Sanyasa Yoga* of the *Brahmabadhuta* Order.
	3	44	94	The *Brahmabadhuta Sanyasa* code of conduct.
	4	21 (104)	72 (287)	*Yoga* of Liberation while living.
2	8	235	667	
Total Vols. *I* & *II*				
4	16	458	1381	

Abstract of Volume I

The author examines the meaning, classification and origin of the Vedas, and derivation of the Vedanta, the name and number of the *Upanishads*, etc. In trying to explain *Visuddhadwaitabada*, he concludes, on the basis of the important *Shrutis*, that Brahman is truth, knowledge, infinite, one; second to none, beyond all forms. It is only with the knowledge of the unqualified *Param Brahman* that there can be liberation.

In the second sub-foot, the doctrine of creation has been explained. Prior to creation, *Param Brahman* was present and He only is the cause of creation and none else. It is due to the self-realised *Mahima* of *Param Brahman* that the innumerable worlds, like atoms, originate, exist and are destroyed. In the third sub-foot, the supremacy of *Visuddhadwaitabada* has been established. After refuting the different ways of abstaining from sorrow as laid down in the different philosophies, the author has established that surrendering oneself to *Param Brahman* is the only way of killing sorrow and obtaining salvation. In the last sub-foot of the first foot, it has been stated that *Param Brahman* is omnipresent, pure and unqualified in His own glory. In one *Prabhu Param Brahman*, every being is contained.

In the first sub-foot of the last foot of the first volume, the doctrine of the four great Vedic dicta has been analysed. Different opinions about the soul, *i.e.*, the son as soul, the body as soul, the senses as soul, the heart as soul, the mind as soul, the intellect as soul, ignorance as soul, knowledge as soul and the void as soul, have been analysed and rejected. Then the author, in agreement with the Vedanta, has proved that the soul is ever pure, wise, free and true. There is, therefore, complete identity between the individual soul and the Supreme *Brahman*. The author's conclusion is that *Param Brahman* only is to be worshipped, and none else.

In the second sub-foot, the philosophy of Satya Mahima Dharma as *Brahma Jnana Bhakti Yoga* has been defined. Meditation or prayer has an important role to play in every human life. The principles and methods of *Brahma sharana* have been enunciated with justification. The mental *sharana* has also been discussed. In the third sub-foot, the practices peculiar to Satya Mahima Dharma have been described. The *guru-shishya* relation has been considered and the textual evidence in support of the system of initiation into Mahima Dharma

has been advanced. There is no caste consideration in the religion.

The importance of achieving the equanimity of the mind has been considered in the fourth and last sub-foot. The means to this end are avoidance of evil thoughts, evil company, idle talks, evil desires, etc. and control of the six passions, the study of the holy texts, life with holy men, remembering Brahman and acquisition of spiritual knowledge.

Abstract of Volume II

It has been established beyond doubt that only *Param Brahman*, who is one, indivisible, secondless, unwritten, unmanifest, indescribable and indestructible, is to be meditated upon. He is true, and all the visible forms of idol are false. The names and forms are unreal, and *Sachinmaya Brahman* only is real. So visit to places of pilgrimage and resort to rituals, fasting, etc. are useless. External forms are not Brahman. Concentration on such external forms does not last long. For achieving liberation, meditation on Brahman is essential, and that is exactly what is laid down in Mahima Dharma.

Under sub-foot (2), the doctrine of rebirth and action has been analysed. It is for the wise and discriminating persons to realise the painful and endless cycle of births and deaths, and, on acceptance of the doctrine of rebirth, to adopt pure devotion, acquisition of knowledge and detached action favourable for liberation.

Thus the principle of detached and unalloyed action has been examined in sub-foot (3). The conduct, according to this principle, has been discussed. As *Param Brahman* only is unattached and all else is attached to the gratification of desires, unattached action is to be practised. This is exactly the doctrine of the *Visuddhadwaitabada* as enunciated in Mahima Dharma.

In the concluding sub-foot of the foot (3), the two Orders of Mahima Dharma, *i.e.*, householders and *sanyasis*, have been described and the important duties of the former have been dealt with. The company of holy men, the study of holy texts, respect for the holy and great men, obedience to the parents and the elders, offering food to the holy, putting on saffron-coloured cloth, following a celibate life, praying for the avoidance of evil dreams and evil thoughts, *Mahima balyalila*, duties at the *Brahma muhurtta*, truth, and non-violence as ways of life have been examined. It has been established that the Order of the householders is the foundation of all Orders.

In the last foot, the main point of consideration is *Visuddhadwaitabada*. In the first sub-foot, the renunciation of the world has been considered. The steps and practices thereof have been analysed. The practice of wisdom through a 20-point programme to light the lamp of wisdom, as the world is transitory and false, has been discussed in detail.

This being done, *bairagya* starts after the renunciation of the worldly life. Then the *bairagi* adopts the *apara sanyasa* Order and, subsequently, the *para sanyasa* Order on fulfilment of the conditions of *sadhana*, etc. This has been the main point of discussion in sub-foot (2). It is continued in sub-foot (3). Finally, in the last sub-foot, the doctrine of liberation in the present life, according to *Visuddhadwaita Brahmabada*, for which Mahima Swami had his self-revelation, has been considered.

20. **An Exposition of the Satya Mahima Dharma** (No. 1 in Table A)

This booklet in English runs into 25 pages. It is dated September, 1938, and was published in 1956. The main topics of discussion are : (*a*) Mahima religion, pages 1 to 4 ; (*b*) Mahima prayer, pages 4 to 10 ; (*c*) daily conduct of the followers, pages 10 to 12 ; (*d*) duties of the *gruhi* devotee, pages 13 to 15 ; (*e*) rules of conduct of the

Abadhuta Sanyasis, pages 15 to 18 ; (*f*) daily duties of the *Sanyasa* Order, pages 18 to 20 ; and (*g*) the Founder, pages 20 to 25.

In this small brochure, as many as 20 *slokas*, mainly from the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Vishnu Purana*, the *Mahanirvana Tantra*, the *Katha Shruti*, the *Brahma Vaivartta Purana* and other holy texts, have been cited to establish the principles and practices of Mahima Dharma.

21. **Mahima Dharma Darshana** (No. 5 in Table A)

This paper on the philosophy and principles of Mahima Dharma was presented at the World Religious Conference held at Puri on December 5, 1974.

Before the hour-long paper was read, Biswanath Baba had his *Brahma sharana* with the recitation of the relevant Upanishadic text for the welfare of mankind. He explained *Mahima* as the ever realised, as the acme of greatness, as the creator of all creations, and as the One, Second to none, sustaining all creations. He is the highest of the high. The entire universe, which has originated from *Mahima*, is only one foot, and the remaining three feet are ever-present, ever-immortal, above all, at the highest. This Mahima Dharma is not, therefore, a religion to be pursued for the fulfilment of worldly desires or for the gratification of the senses. It is the selfless, detached and pure religion or the primordial *satya sanatana dharma*. Then Baba in the course of his speech pointed out that in Mahima Dharma, only *Eka Adwitiya Prabhu Param Brahman* is to be meditated upon. With the whole being, *i.e.*, in body, mind and speech. He and none else is to be remembered. With quotations from the *Shruti Shastras*, Baba showed that *Brahma sharana* is the best, highest and the only means of attaining *amrutatwa*.

The booklet is in two parts. The first part is on the life of the founder of the religion, Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami. In the short span of fifty years, from 1826 to 1876,

he lived and manifested himself. He was not subjected to the various stages of life, *i.e.*, childhood, youth, old age, etc. The social conditions then prevalent warranted his revelation for the re-establishment of the Satya Sanatana Mahima Dharma.

The second part of the paper dwells at length on the philosophy and the principles of the religion, the ethical conduct of the householders and the *Sanyasa* Order, both *Para* and *Apara*, with justification from the commandments of the Guru as contained in the writings of Bhima Bhoi and from the *Shruti Shastras*. A saint is not for show. He is not one who lives without food and water. He is one who does not commit himself to sin in thought, speech and action. He has to adopt *yama* and *niyama* as given in the philosophical treatises on Mahima Dharma.

The theory of rebirth is accepted in Mahima Dharma. The theory of creation has also been discussed. The author concludes by summing up the philosophy of Mahima Dharma as *ekamevadwitiyam*. It is *Visuddhatma Jnana-bhakti Yoga*.

The introduction to the booklet has been written by me and covers twelve pages. A detailed account of Baba's journey from Mahima Gadi, his night-halt at the Batagram Primary School, the presence of the Mahima devotees, including *apara sanyasis*, *bairagis* and *gruhis*, and Baba's oral speech preceding the presentation of the paper has been given.

The pamphlet is available in Oriya, Hindi and English.

22. **Gruhasthashrama Subhakarmavidhana** (No. 3 in Table A)

It was published during January, 1977. It is in 152 pages in addition to 18 pages devoted to the author's own introduction, two opinions and the detailed contents.

It is actually a code of conduct for the lay disciples. It is well-known that each faith has its own philosophy and principles which determine the code of conduct of its followers. This brings about unity and integration between theory and practice. So the code of conduct for the followers, both leading life in the family and renouncing it, has to be understood and tested according to the metaphysical and ethical bases of the faith. This was done by Baba in *Pratipadaka*, *Darshanam* and other texts. But there was a need for a separate, systematic and scholastic treatmen of the code of conduct. Even the devotees felt the need for it.

On analysis, the book may be taken to fall into three sections : (*i*) *Subhakathana* (auspicious utterances), (*ii*) *Subhakarmavidhana* (auspicious code of conduct) and (*iii*) *Subhagitika* (auspicious recitations) in addition to two essays on life surrendered to Brahman and an opinion on the book. The code of conduct covers all activities from conception to death. The landmarks in this life-long process are conception in the mother's womb, child-birth, ceremony to name the baby, to feed the baby, to crop hair for the first time, to punch the ears, initiation to learning and religion, sacred-thread ceremony, marriage, starting residential house and living therein, making tanks, wells, etc. and putting the water thereof to use, practice of the religious principles during travel by motor or bus, train, etc., using the first harvested crops, specially rice, prayer for rain to fall, prayer for food, cloth, offspring, etc., purification during death, etc., and prayer for the departed soul to rest in peace, etc. A detailed discussion of the procedure to be adopted in regard to the wedding ceremony has been outlined from pages 26 to 65. Such topics as the burial of the *siddha-sadhus*, dust of the Lord's Feet (*Prabhupadarenu*), *Prabhu poornima*, construction of *Tungi-Ashramas*, devotees who have joined *Satsang Gosthi*, etc. have also been discussed. The auspicious recitations can follow the concerned auspicious programmes and can also be recited independently. They

include (1) hymn, (2) *Mahima dhuni*, (3) wishing well of children, (4) initiation to schooling, (5) auspicious duties, (6) prayer by husband and wife, (7) finding water source, (8) a new residence and its use for the first time, (9) falling of rain, and (10) freeing oneself from the worldly ties.

The supporting evidences for the code of conduct according to the principles of Mahima Dharma have been cited from the Vedas, the *Manu Samhita*, the *Upanishads*, etc. in the appropriate contexts.

In the auspicious utterances which serve as the author's introduction to the book, Baba has defined *Upanishadic Brahma Vidya* and has established *Brahmabada* of Mahima Dharma stictly according to the *Sarvopanishadsara Astottarsata Upanishad.* He further asserts that the devotees of the Mahima Dharma should commit to memory and recite the *Prabhunama bhajana*, *janana*, etc. strictly according to the commandments of the Great Guru Prabhu Param Brahma.

Prof. Gauri Kumar Brahma, one of the outstanding exponents, critics, writers and teachers of Oriya language and literature, has added an opinion on the text. I have attempted to summarise the text as the means to achieving life surrendered to *Brahman.*

As in other books, a list of authoritative texts has been appended.

APPENDIX I

Cardinal Principles

(Code of Conduct)

1. This visible universe originates from the Mahima of *Param Brahman.* Everything in the world is replete with consciousness due to the indications of the All-conscious Almighty. *Param Brahman* is the creator of all things, animate and inanimate.

2. The One Unwritten, *Param Brahman* is the Lord under whom the followers of Mahima Dharma should take shelter.

3. Brahman is Reality, Consciousness, Bliss (*Sat Chit Ananda Swarupa*), Unwritten (*Alekha*), Formless (*Arupa*), Unseen (*Adrishya*), Undirected (*Anirdesya*), not subject to decay (*Anakshara*), Unmanifest (*Avyakta*), without name (*Anama*), without body (*Adeha*), without title (*Nirupadhi*), *Nirvikaya*, *Niranjana*, *Nirvikara*, Lord (*Bibhu*), Absolute (*Parameswara*), Gracious (*Dayamaya*), Omniscient (*Sarvantaryami*), Giver of knowledge and Devotion (*Jnanabhakti-data*), Omnipresent and Detached. He is All-graceful.

4. During *Brahma sharana*, the devotees dedicate themselves to *Alekha Param Brahman* in body, mind and word. They derive all actions from Him and remain ever devoted to Him.

5. Idolatry and polytheism are to be shunned in Mahima Dharma. Worship while on pilgrimage, fast, etc. is to be avoided.

6. Daily *sharana* and *darshana* is practised, as prescribed, in a pure state of mind during *Brahma muhurtta* (the time roughly an hour before sunrise and following

sunset) after taking bath and making oneself pure and clean in all possible ways.

7. The devotees should always be in the company of the holy and be engrossed in holy deeds.
8. They should refrain from evil company and unholy deeds and practices.
9. The six passions, *viz.*, lust, anger, greed, alcohol, etc., are to be kept under control.
10. The holy and authoritative religious texts are to be studied, and the unholy and useless books are to be avoided.
11. Theft, sexual intercourse with women other than one's own wife, and violence towards animals are, on no account, to be resorted to. The non-violent way of life is to be lived.
12. Impure food of all kinds, and food offered to gods and goddesses are to be given up. The devotees should not take food between sunset and sunrise. Food is to be taken during the daytime only.
13. They should shun falsehood, egoism and crookedness.
14. They should always live the life of truth, kindness, peace and forgiveness.
15. The sense of pride arising out of caste, knowledge, wealth, etc. should be avoided.
16. They should take instruction from *siddha-sadhus*, belonging to *para sanyasa* Order and devoted to *Param Brahman*, and avoid other so-called *gurus*.
17. They should wear simple dress, particularly saffron-coloured cloth, and avoid pomp and jewellery.
18. The *gruhis* devoted to Brahman must keep themselves engaged in the service of *sanyasis* and *sadhus* and should not covet others' wealth.

19. They should remain calm and composed in weal and woe. They should not grieve when any occasion for sorrow arises.
20. They should not deviate from the principles of the Satya Sanatana Mahima Dharma in any circumstances.
21. They should always try to do something for the welfare of mankind. They should make the best use of money and not waste it in dishonest ways.
22. For the concentration of mind, they should practise friendship and compassion .
23. The *gruhis* must strictly practise celibacy and have sexual intercourse, as prescribed, according to the menstrual period of the wife. Other women should be treated as mothers.
24. They should be indifferent to wordly affairs and surrender themselves to *Param Brahman*. They should remain ever detached in all their activities.
25. They should abstain from gambling and attending dance, drama, etc. They should avoid unholy and idle gossip. They should resort to no *sadhana* and *bhajana* other than Brahma *sadhana* and *bhajana*.
26. Realising that life is ephemeral, they should remain constantly engaged in cultivating self-knowledge (*atmajnana*). They should also have their mind constantly fixed on ultimate reality (*tattwa jnana*).
27. The *tyagi*, *i.e.*, he who has renounced the world, should also observe the above rules. He should have no attachment towards women and wealth, and not even touch them.
28. They should adopt the prescribed *Abadhuta* Order.
29. They should strictly observe the rules laid down for *sànyasis* systematically and should, on no account, deviate from any one of them.

30. They should keep on moving from one village to another as prescribed, treating the men and the women of the world as father and mother respectively.

31. Not even a moment is to be spent in worldly affairs save in meditation and *bhajana* (*Brahma smarana* and *bhajana*). The authoritative treatises on Mahima Dharma along with other texts, like the Vedanta, etc., are to be studied and their spirit should be realised.

32. The gospels of the Satya Mahima Dharma should be preached among the people for the good of the world.

APPENDIX II

Bhajana

Hark Ye, O noble souls, the message of the religion, ever true,

Supreme Brahman is the only Lord, the Master of all creations.

Creator of the whole Universe, the cause of all life.

Absolute Lord, the controller of all, the well-wisher of all.

Consciousness of all souls, Absolute, the Truth, the Sentient, the Bliss.

The Everlasting, Eternal, void of qualities, the Divine Teacher, without beginning.

The Supreme Unmanifest, beyond the manifested and the unmanifested,

And Indescribable is His wonderful glory.

He is One, Secondless, Pure, without change, the Infinite.

The Immovable, the Immortal, the Imperishable, the noblest of the noble, the Eternal.

In the Great Void, above all voids, lives, moves and has His Being.

Without alternative, the Eternal, the ever Full, the indescribable, the Shapeless.

He is the Supreme Brahman, the abode of the whole Universe,

Meditate in your heart on His Foot, the source of all fearlessness.

In a posture of steadfastness and quietude with mind set on the Absolute.

Chant incessantly the name of the Supreme Brahman.

Meditate on the Unknown, the Immeasurable, the Imperceptible and the Unobtainable.

Remember the Formless Bliss, think with due inference.

Always and ever recite with knowledge, devotion and purity of heart.

In both spiritual sittings, morning and evening, realis Brahman within your heart.

That the only pure path of devotion leading to the attainment of Brahman.

Pursuit of all other paths is bound to be fruitless.

Realise within you the words of the Guru and as in the holy texts.

Surrender yourself day and night at the Supreme Foot dispelling all fears.

Thus all men will certainly attain salvation free from the bondage of the world.

Soon you will be released from the traps of birth, death and time.

Life shall enter into the Supreme Abode.

It shall lie in Supreme Bliss, merged in Brahman.

(Translated from *Balyalila Gita* (No. 3 in Table A)

APPENDIX III

Glossary

Abadhuta	A wandering mendicant.
Abadhutashrami	One belonging to the order of wandering mendicants.
Adabandha	A belt made of *Murga* (*Sanseviera Rox burghiana*) fibre to be put on round the waist.
Adhyaksha	President.
Adwitiya	One without a second.
Akhada	The courtyard round a *tungi*. The one inside is meant for *sharana darshana*, whereas the one outside is used for taking food.
Akhanda	Undivided, indivisible.
Alekha	Unwritten.
Alekha Brahma, *Alekha Mahima*, *Alekha Param Brahman*, *Alekha Prabhu*	Unwritten Supreme Lord.
Ananta Sayana	Meditation while lying on the great mythological serpent with a thousand hoods.
Apara Sanyasa	The Order of mendicants next to the supreme Order (*Para Sanyasa*). They put on *dora kaupina*.
Asanas	Postures during meditation.
Ashramas	The stages in life. Places for penance and meditation. Order in the practice of the faith.
Abhaya Mandala	The sphere of Brahman which dispels fear.

Baba	Father, the Great Lord of the Universe. The self-realised *Para Sanyasis* are termed *Baba*.
Bairagi	One who has renounced the world and has not accepted the *sanyasa* Order.
Balkala	Bark of *Kumbhi* tree (*careya arborea*).
Balyalila	Children's function.
Bhajana	Devotional song.
Bhakta	Devotee.
Bhiksha	Principal meal
Birakta Jibana	Life renounced.
Visuddhatma Jnana Bhakti Yoga	Yoga of pure self-knowledge and devotion.
Visuddhadwaita Brahmabada	Theory of pure non-dualism.
Brahman	Lord.
Brahmabadhuta	A wandering monk surrendered to the Supreme Lord.
Brahmanistha	Surrendered to the Supreme Lord.
Brahma sadhana	Practice of surrendering to the Supreme Lord.
Brahma samarpita	Surrendered to Absolute Brahman.
Brahma sharana	Act of surrendering oneself to the Supreme Lord.
Brahma smarana	Remembering the Supreme Lord.
Chintana	Concentration, thinking.
Chautisa	A poem consisting of 34 couplets beginning with the 34 letters of the alphabet from *ka* to *ksha*.
Dharmadhama	Holy place.
Dhuni	Sacred fire devoted to the Supreme Lord.
Dhunimandir	Temple where *dhuni* is burnt.

Dorakaupinadhari	An *apara sanyasi*
Eka	One.
Falguna	February-March.
Gadimandal	Monastery at Joranda in Dhenkanal district in Orissa.
Ganesh puja	Worship of the deity of learning.
Ghatatma	Embodied soul.
Ghrutahuti	Burning of melted butter.
Gini	Cymbals.
Gruhasthashrama	Order of householders resorting to the faith.
Gruhi	A householder.
Guru	The great teacher. The Supreme Lord of the Universe.
Jagata	World.
Jagata and *Bhagata*	Mankind.
Janana	Devotional song of supplication.
Karuna	Compassion.
Khanjani	Tambourine.
Mahima	Glory. The Supreme Lord of the Universe. Founder of the Mahima Dharma.
Mahima Dharma	The faith founded by Mahima Swami.
Mahimagadi	The monastery located at Joranda in the district of Dhenkanal in Orissa.
Mahima Mahaprabhu, Mahima Prabhu, Mahima Swami, Mahima Gosain	The Supreme Lord of the Universe.
Murti	One, unit.
Namabhajana	Reciting the name of the Lord.
Natha	Supreme Lord.
Param Brahma	Supreme Lord.

Para Sanyasa Order	Mendicants of the Supreme Order. They put on bark.
Prabuddha	Wisdom incarnate, the Awakened.
Prabuddha Guru Mahima Swami	Supreme Lord, Founder of Mahima Dharma.
Sadhaka	Practitioner.
Sadhana	Practice.
Sadhu	The holy man, ascetic.
Sadhu bhaktas	Holy devotees.
Sanyasi	Monk, ascetic, mendicant.
Sabha	Conference, meeting.
Sharana	Surrender, meditation.
Shukla Chaturdasi	The 14th day leading to *purnima* (full moon-day).
Shruti	The Vedas.
Siddha	Self-realised, perfect.
Siddha Baba	Self-realised mendicant.
Sloka	Stanza in Sanskrit verse.
Smarana	Remembrance.
Smriti	Scriptures other than the Vedas.
Swadhyaya	Self-study.
Swatma Yoga Samadhi	The unification of the human mind with the *Param Brahman.*
Tungi	One-roomed house meant for *Para Sanyasis.* It is also known as *Mahimashrama*, *Alekha Tungi*, and *Alekha Abadhuta Tungi.*
Tyagabairagya	Sacrifice and renunciation.
Tyagi	One who has renounced the worldly life.
Veka Vana	*Balkala* or *Kaupina* used for maintaining privacy is *veka*, and the one used on the head is *vana.*

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